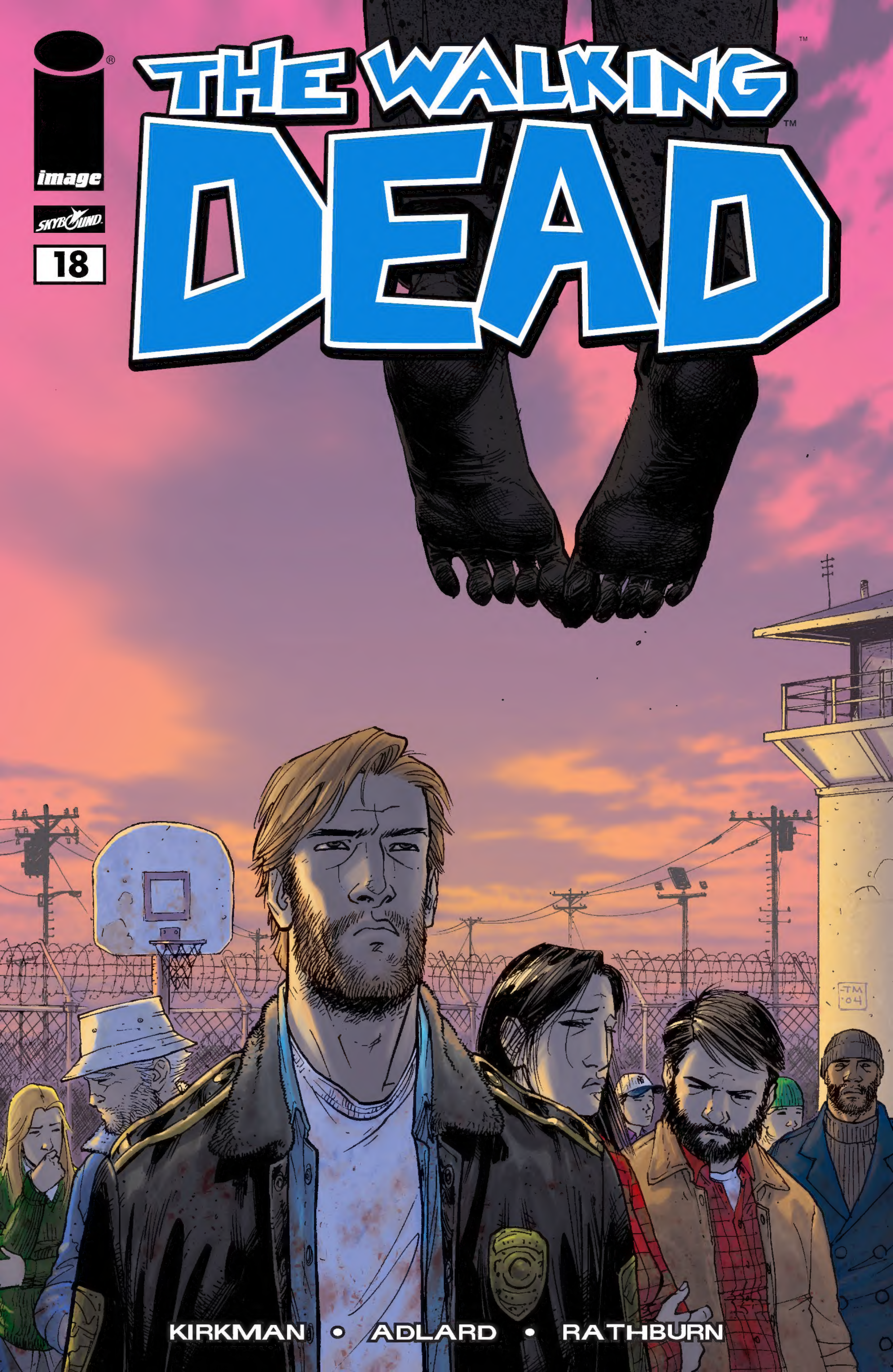




SKYBOUND

18

THE WALKING DEAD



KIRKMAN • ADLARD • RATHBURN

IMAGE COMICS PRESENTS

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YEAH--A
LOT LIKE
SHANE.



ONLY I KILLED
SHANE *BEFORE*
HE KILLED
ANYBODY.



THAT'S
RIGHT, BUT--
BUT YOU--
DID THE
RIGHT
THING.



SO
DID
I.



ALLEN,
COULD YOU
GIVE US A
MINUTE?



SURE THING,
RICK. C'MON KIDS,
LET'S GIVE THE
GRIMES FAMILY
SOME TIME
TO TALK.

I'M NOT MAKING
THESE DECISIONS
LIGHTLY, LORI.
I'M THINKING
EVERYTHING
THROUGH.

I KNOW THINGS
GOT A LITTLE
HEATED OUTSIDE
EARLIER AND I MAY
NOT HAVE SEEMED
COMPLETELY
RATIONAL--
BUT I
WAS.



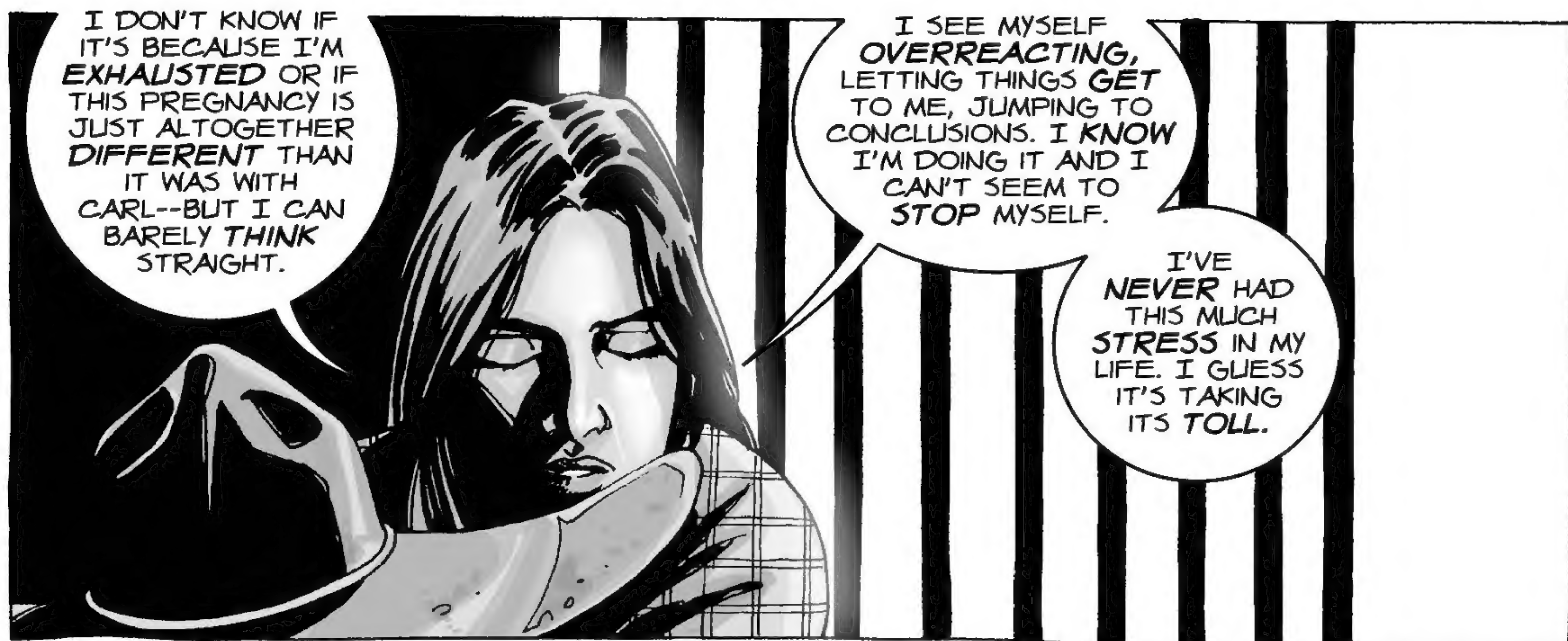
I'M AN OFFICER OF
THE **LAW**. I MAY NOT
HAVE ANYONE TO
ANSWER TO ANYMORE--
BUT THESE PEOPLE
LOOK TO ME TO KEEP
THEM **SAFE**. I **OWE**
IT TO THEM TO DO
EVERYTHING IN
MY POWER TO
DO SO.



WHERE I SEE
JUSTICE, YOU SEE
ANOTHER **MURDER**.
MORE THAN ANYONE
ELSE OUT HERE--I
NEED **YOU** ON MY
SIDE, HON'. I JUST
CAN'T **LIVE** WITH IT
OTHERWISE. I NEED
YOU TO SEE
MY SIDE OF
THINGS.



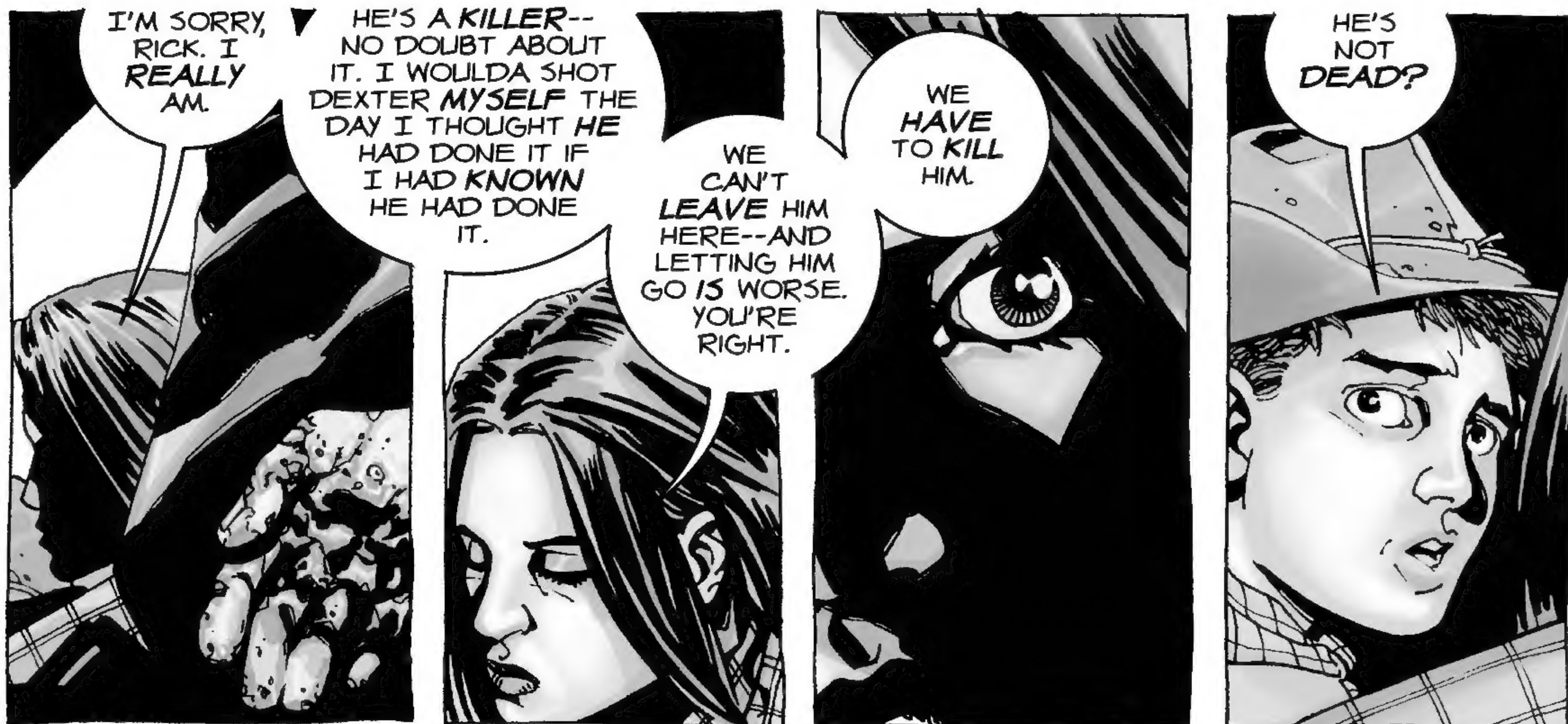
I
DON'T
KNOW **WHAT**
I SEE
ANYMORE,
RICK.



I DON'T KNOW IF IT'S BECAUSE I'M **EXHAUSTED** OR IF THIS PREGNANCY IS JUST ALTOGETHER **DIFFERENT** THAN IT WAS WITH CARL--BUT I CAN **BARELY THINK STRAIGHT.**

I SEE MYSELF **OVERREACTING**, LETTING THINGS **GET** TO ME, JUMPING TO CONCLUSIONS. I **KNOW** I'M DOING IT AND I CAN'T SEEM TO **STOP MYSELF.**

I'VE **NEVER** HAD THIS MUCH **STRESS** IN MY LIFE. I GUESS IT'S TAKING ITS **TOLL.**



I'M SORRY, RICK. I **REALLY** AM.

HE'S A **KILLER**-- NO DOUBT ABOUT IT. I WOULD'VE SHOT DEXTER **MYSELF** THE DAY I THOUGHT HE HAD DONE IT IF I HAD **KNOWN** HE HAD DONE IT.

WE CAN'T **LEAVE** HIM HERE--AND LETTING HIM GO IS WORSE. YOU'RE **RIGHT.**

WE **HAVE** TO **KILL** HIM.

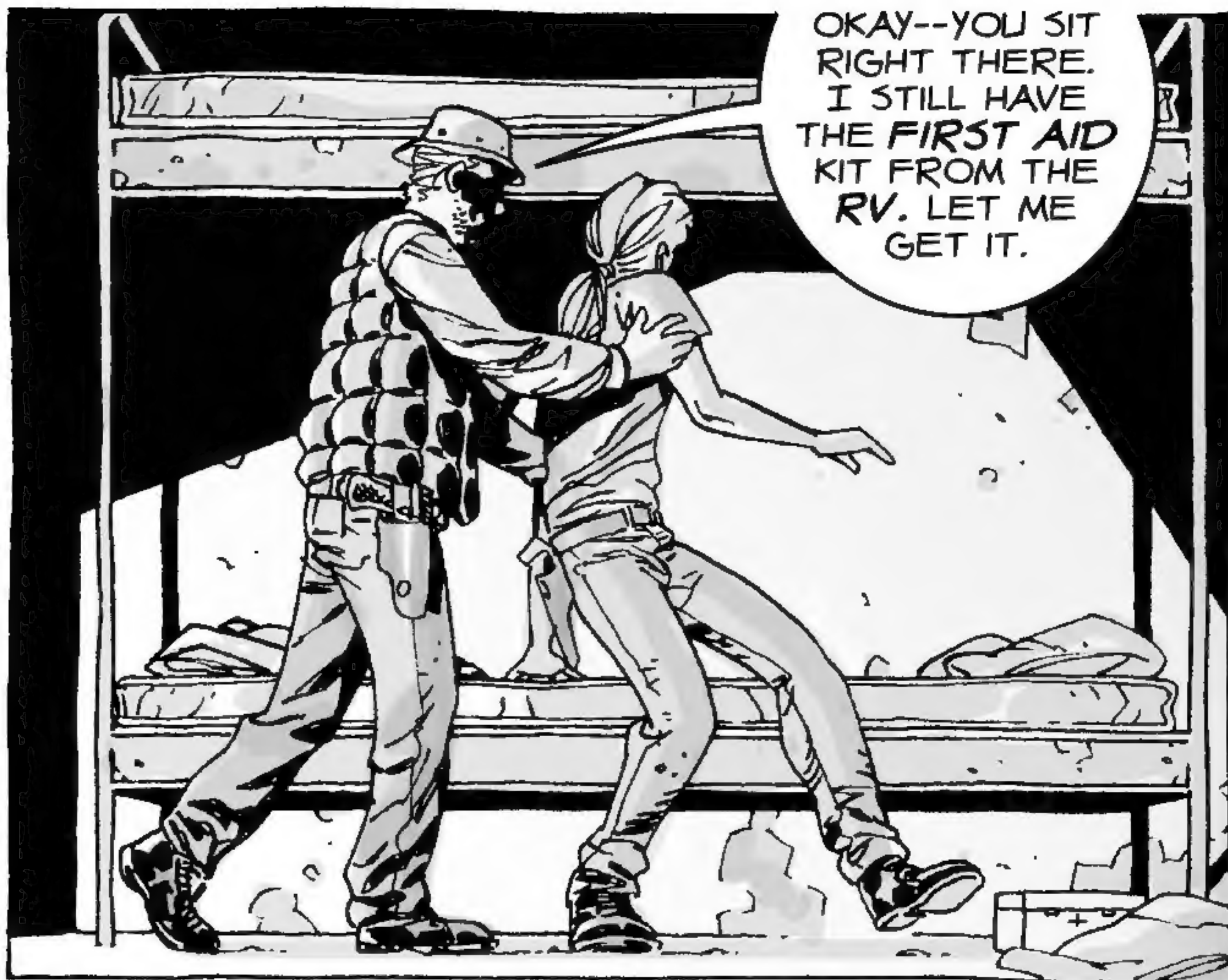
HE'S NOT **DEAD?**



NOT **YET.** BUT IF WE'RE GOING TO KEEP HIM FROM KILLING ANYONE **ELSE**, WE'RE GOING TO HAVE TO **KILL** HIM. DO YOU UNDERSTAND, CARL?

YEAH. HE'S A **BAD GUY**-- LIKE **SHANE.** HE COULD **KILL** US.

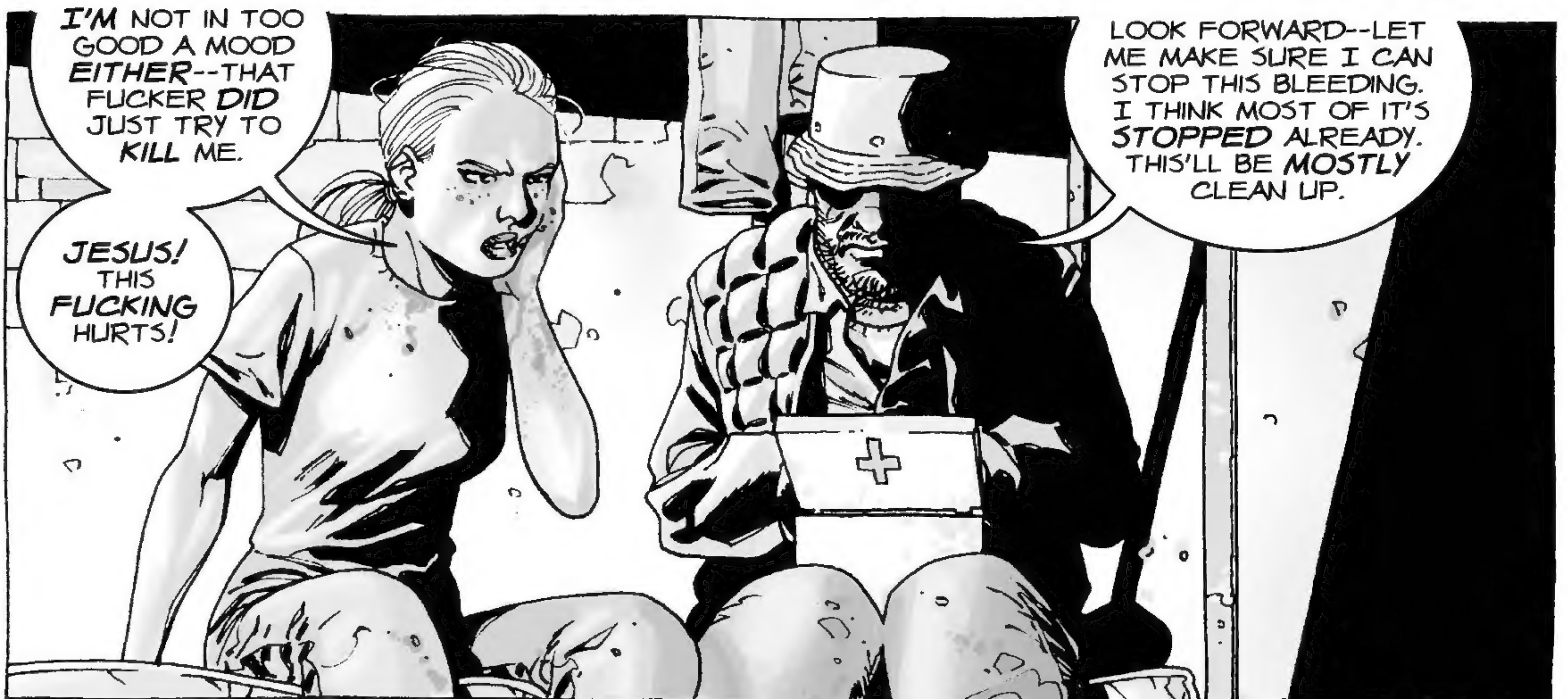
HE **WON'T**, SON. I **PROMISE.**



OKAY--YOU SIT
RIGHT THERE.
I STILL HAVE
THE **FIRST AID**
KIT FROM THE
RV. LET ME
GET IT.



HERSHEL'D PROBABLY
DO A BETTER JOB
PATCHING YOU UP BUT I
DON'T THINK HE'S **READY**
TO HELP **ANYONE**
AFTER WHAT
HE JUST WENT
THROUGH.



I'M NOT IN TOO
GOOD A MOOD
EITHER--THAT
FUCKER **DID**
JUST TRY TO
KILL ME.

JESUS!
THIS
FUCKING
HURTS!

LOOK FORWARD--LET
ME MAKE SURE I CAN
STOP THIS BLEEDING.
I THINK MOST OF IT'S
STOPPED ALREADY.
THIS'LL BE **MOSTLY**
CLEAN UP.



DID HE CUT MY
EAR? TELL ME
HE DIDN'T CUT MY
EAR. IT **FELT** LIKE
HE DID, BUT I
NEVER HAD A
CHANCE TO
CHECK.



YOUR LOBE IS
GONE--BUT
YOU'LL STILL
BE ABLE TO
HEAR.

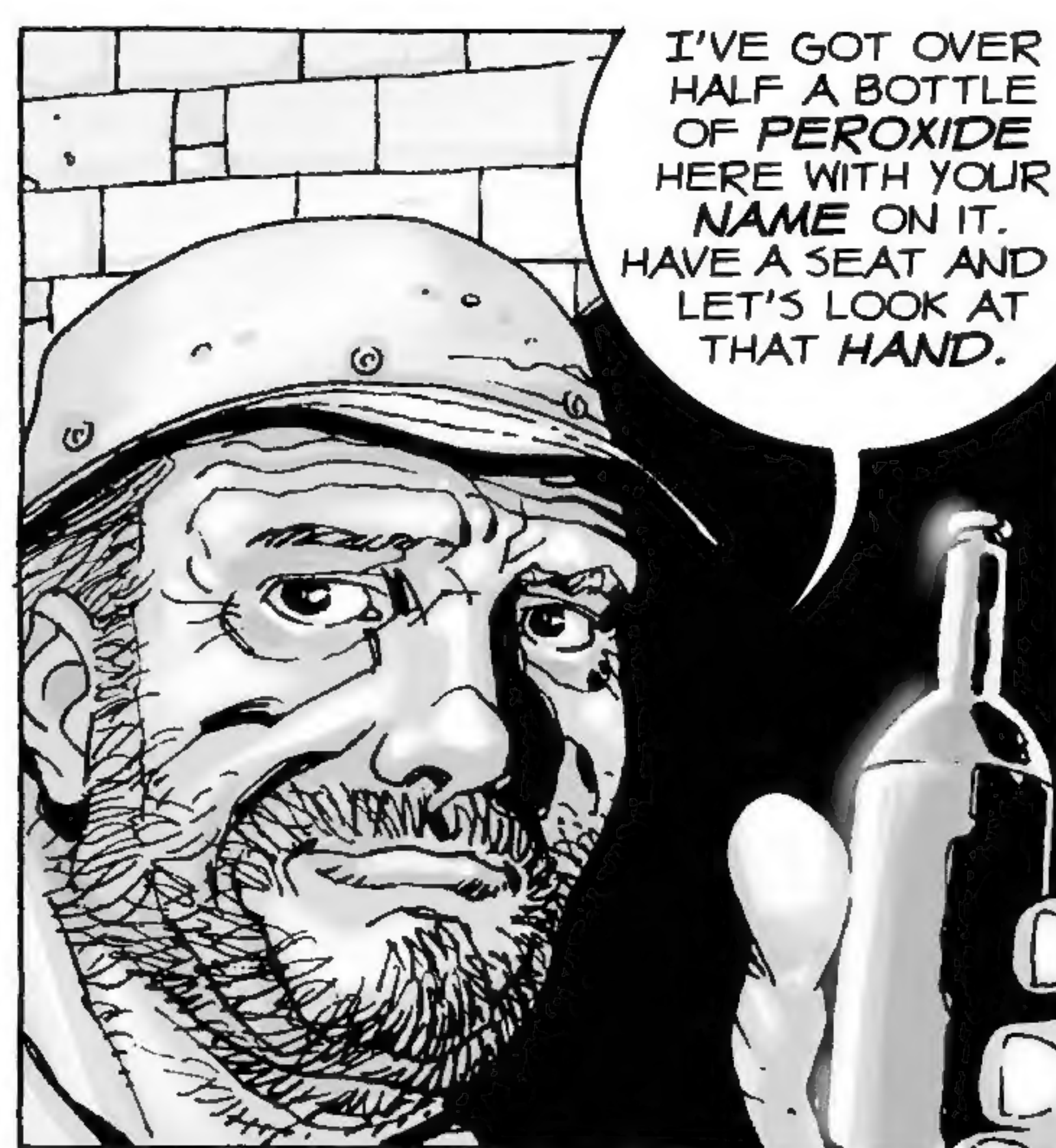


I COULDN'T
CARE **LESS**
ABOUT HEARING.
I DON'T WANT
TO LOOK LIKE
A **FREAK**.

YOU'VE
GOT NOTHING
TO WORRY
ABOUT. YOU'LL
BE AS PRETTY
AS **EVER**, AS
SOON AS WE
CLEAN YOU
UP.



GOT ANYTHING
LEFT IN THAT
FIRST AID KIT
THAT I
COULD
USE?



I'VE GOT OVER
HALF A BOTTLE
OF **PEROXIDE**
HERE WITH YOUR
NAME ON IT.
HAVE A SEAT AND
LET'S LOOK AT
THAT **HAND**.

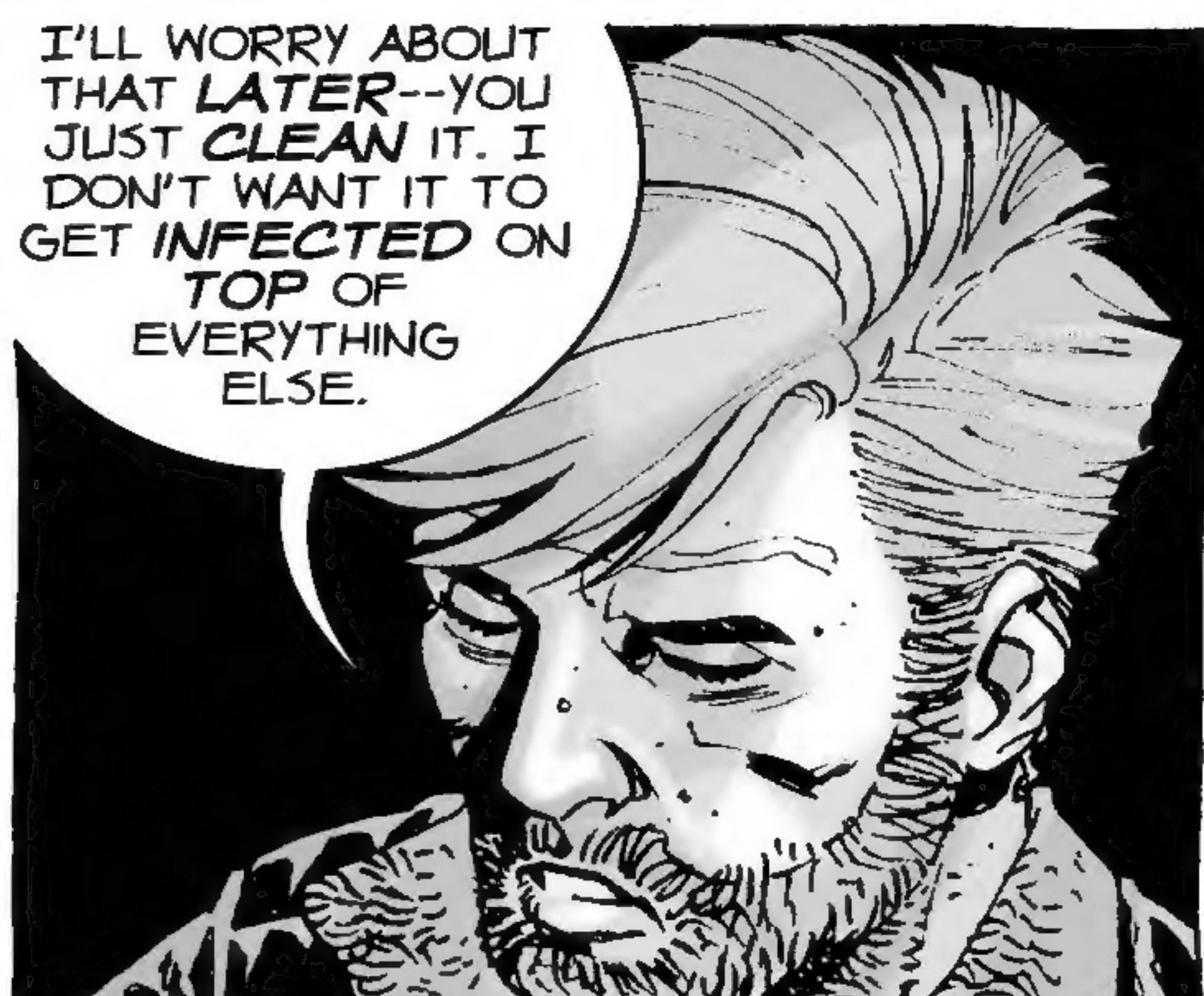


LET
ME WARN
YOU--IT'S
NOT
PRETTY.



JESUS, SON! I
THINK **EVERY ONE**
OF YOUR FINGERS
IS **BROKEN**. YOUR
KNUCKLES ARE
BUSTED **ALL TO**
HELL. THIS ISN'T
GOING TO HEAL
RIGHT **AT ALL**,
RICK... NOT
EVEN **CLOSE**.

I
DON'T
THINK YOU'LL
EVEN BE
ABLE TO
USE
IT.



I'LL WORRY ABOUT
THAT **LATER**--YOU
JUST **CLEAN** IT. I
DON'T WANT IT TO
GET **INFECTED** ON
TOP OF
EVERYTHING
ELSE.



I DON'T
REGRET A
THING.



YOU'RE OFF THE HOOK. IT WASN'T YOU.



THAT IT? THAT **ALL** YOU GONNA SAY?

THAT'S IT. YOU GOING TO START SOME TROUBLE?



YOU STILL GOT ALL THE GUNS?



YEAH. EVERY LAST ONE OF THEM.

THOUGH AFTER WHAT **WE'VE** JUST BEEN THROUGH THE LAST THING WE WANT TO DO IS **USE** THEM.

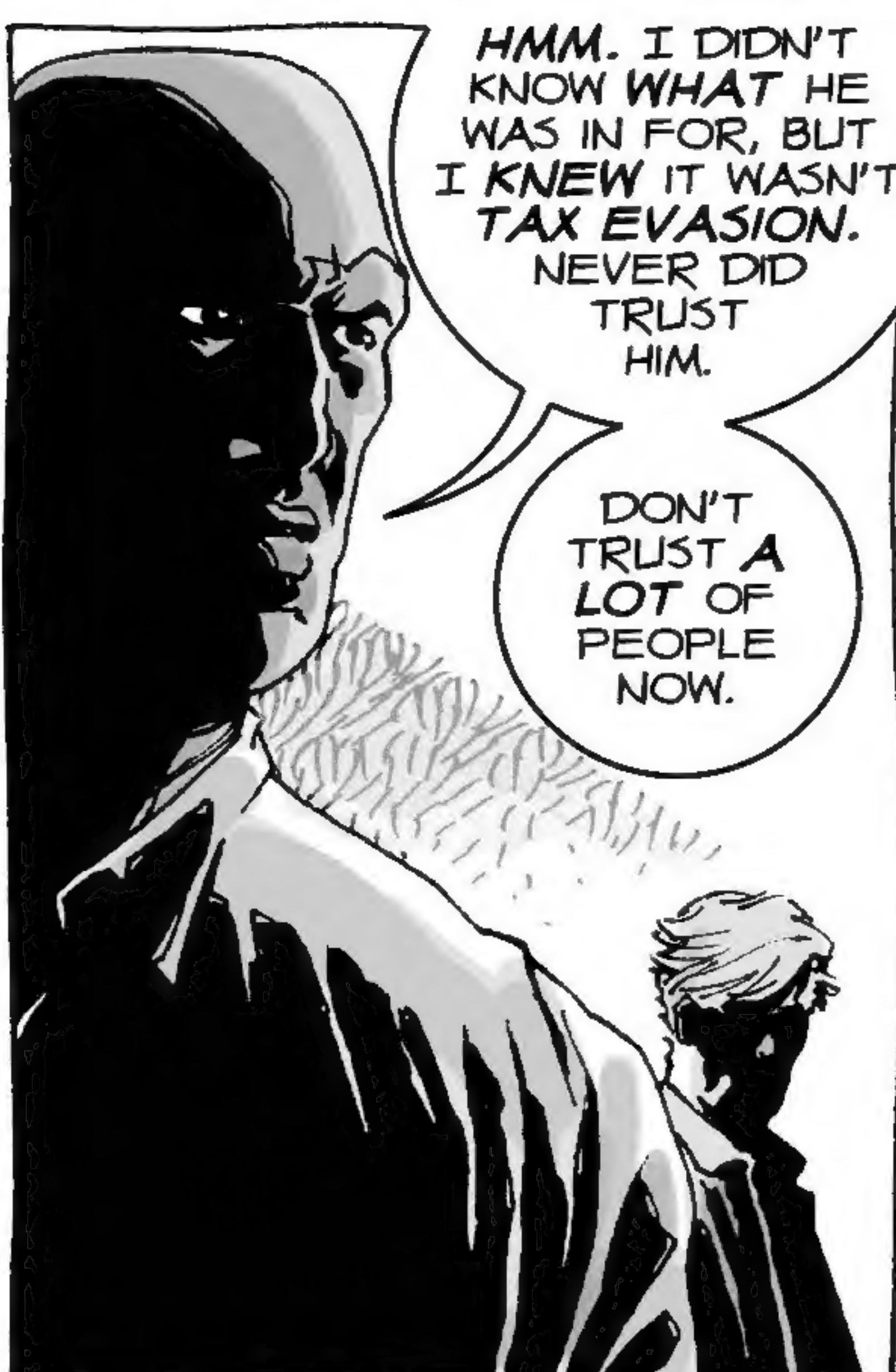


THAT SO? GOOD NEWS, I GUESS.

WHO WAS IT? DID IT I MEAN. **ALLEN?** THAT WAS HIS NAME **RIGHT?** HE SURE LOOKED CRAZY ENOUGH.



ONE OF **YOURS.** THOMAS-- THE "TAX EVADER."



HMM. I DIDN'T KNOW **WHAT** HE WAS IN FOR, BUT I **KNEW** IT WASN'T TAX EVASION. NEVER DID TRUST HIM.

DON'T TRUST A LOT OF PEOPLE NOW.







SO, YOU
THINK THINGS
ARE GOING
TO DIE DOWN
SOON?

HAVEN'T
THEY? I MEAN--
AT LEAST NOW WE
DON'T HAVE THE
DEAD LURKING
AROUND EVERY
CORNER.

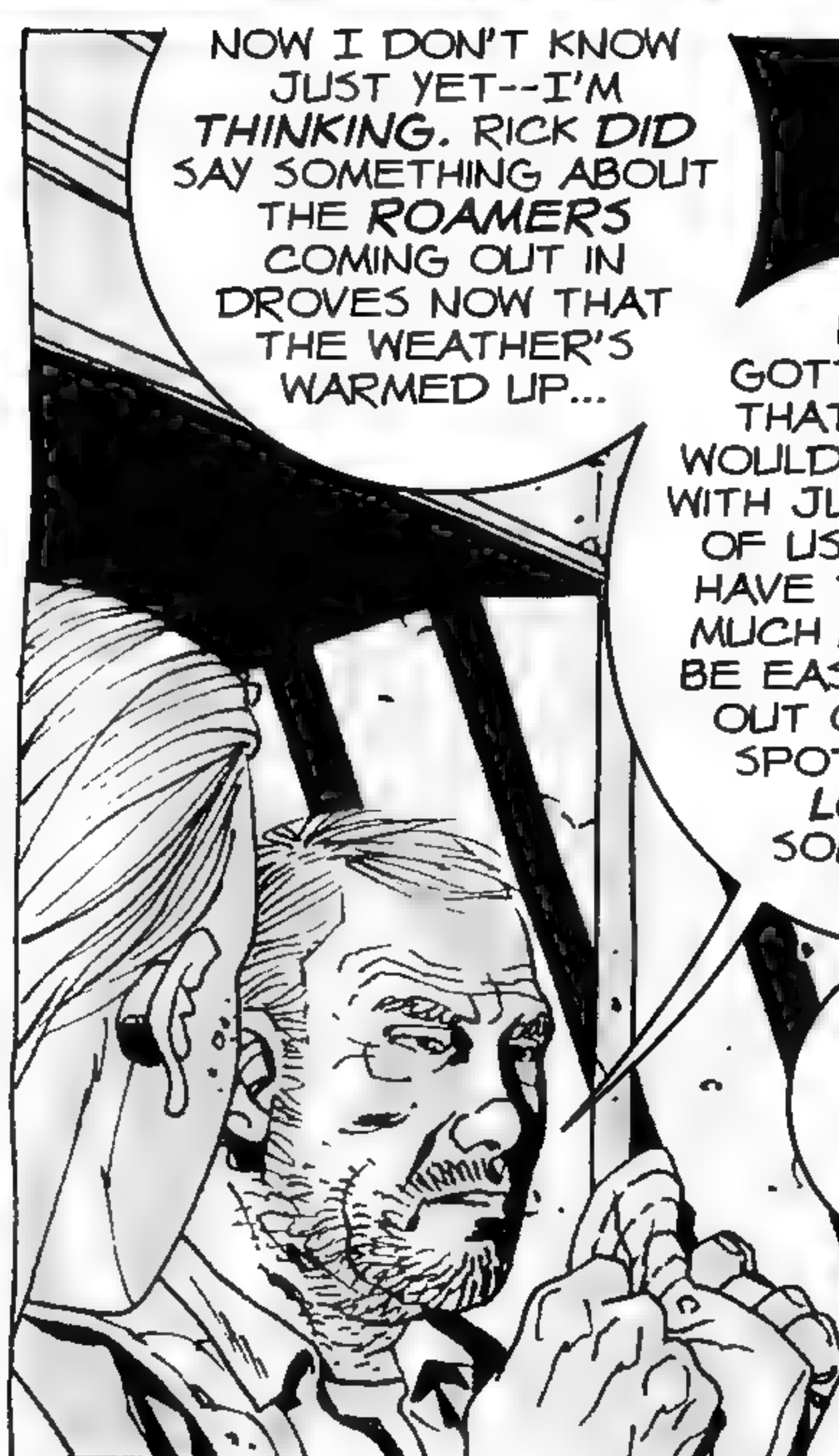
TRUE, BUT
DO YOU *FEEL* ANY
SAFER? RICK BOUNCES
BACK AND FORTH
BETWEEN SICKENINGLY
OPTIMISTIC AND
COMPLETELY ENRAGED.
THE *DEATH TOLL*
CERTAINLY HASN'T
SLOWED DOWN.

WE'RE
SECURE HERE--
BUT FOR HOW
LONG? THIS PLACE
HAS GOT TO BE A
TARGET...WHAT
HAPPENS WHEN
SOMEONE MORE
ORGANIZED
WANTS IT?

MAKES
ME WONDER IF
THERE ISN'T A CLAN
OF LAID BACK PEOPLE
LIKE OURSELVES LOUNGING
ABOUT IN A *WAL-MART*
LIVING OFF PORK AND BEANS--
PLAYING *CARDS* ALL DAY.
THERE'S GOT TO BE
AN *EASIER* WAY,
Y'KNOW?



WHAT ARE YOU
SUGGESTING?
DO YOU THINK
WE SHOULD
LEAVE?



NOW I DON'T KNOW
JUST YET--I'M
THINKING. RICK *DID*
SAY SOMETHING ABOUT
THE *ROAMERS*
COMING OUT IN
DROVES NOW THAT
THE WEATHER'S
WARMED UP...

BUT I
GOTTA THINK--
THAT RV SURE
WOULD BE ROOMY
WITH JUST THE TWO
OF US. WOULDN'T
HAVE TO HAVE AS
MUCH *FOOD*, IT'D
BE EASIER TO GET
OUT OF A TIGHT
SPOT WITHOUT
LOSING
SOMEONE...

LIKE
I SAY--I'M
THINKING.

YOU WORK ALL
THE *ANGLES* AND
LET ME KNOW,
DALE. I DON'T
LIKE THE IDEA OF
ABANDONING
EVERYONE--BUT
I GO WHERE
YOU GO.

I
WANT
TO MAKE
SURE
THAT'S
CLEAR.



GUYS--WHERE
THE **FUCK** IS
HE? WHAT DID
YOU **DO** WITH
HIM?

PUT THE **WASTE**
WITH THE **WASTE**--
THOUGHT IT MIGHT
MAKE HIS WAIT AS
UNPLEASANT AS
IT **SHOULD**
BE.

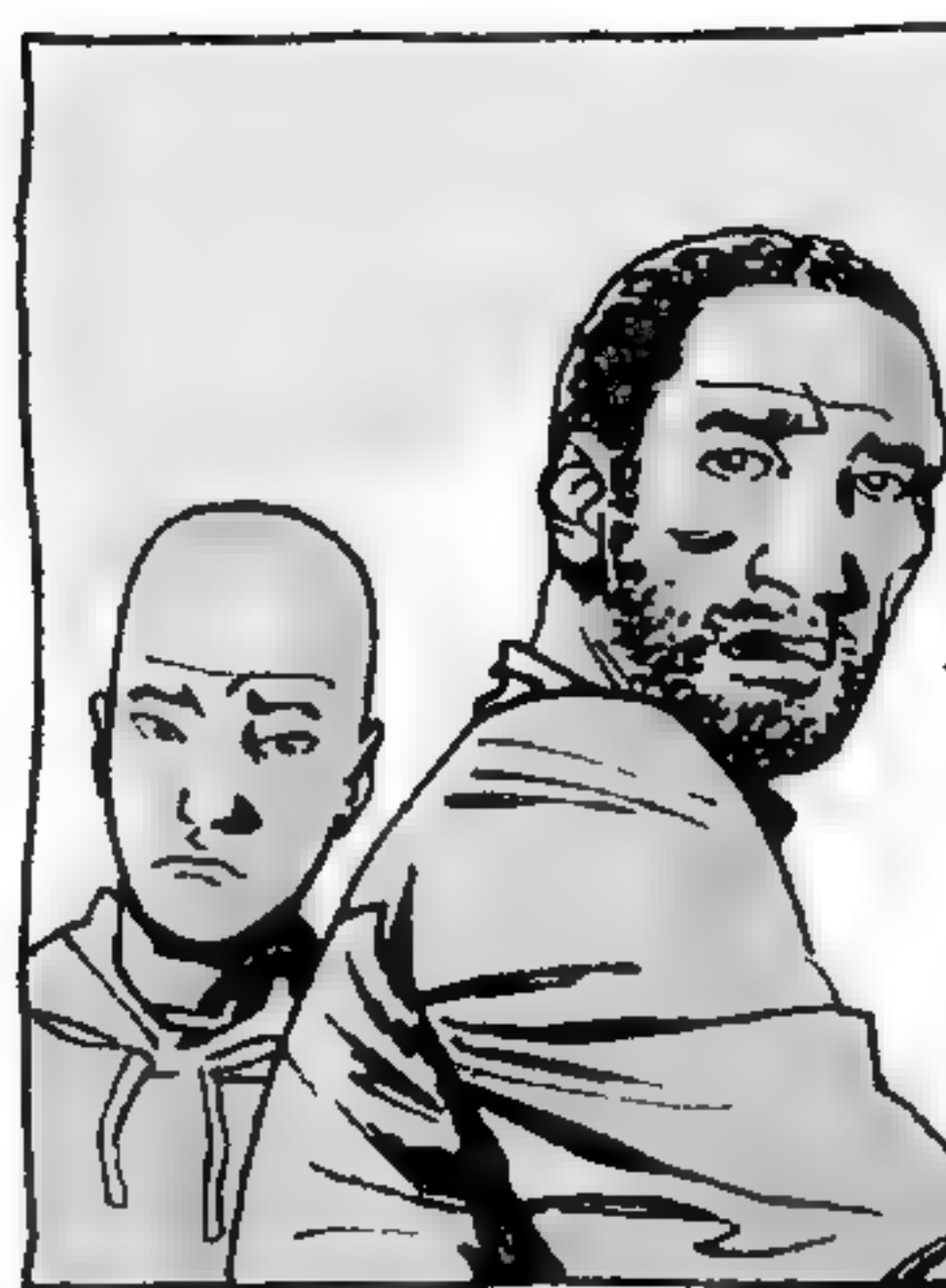
JUST
PUTTING HIM
IN THERE WAS
KILLING
ME.

IF YOU DIDN'T
BREAK HIS
NOSE TOO
BAD--HE'S **NOT**
ENJOYING
HIMSELF.



THERE'S NO
VENTILATION IN
THERE! HE'LL
SUFFOCATE
BEFORE WE CAN
HANG HIM. THAT'S
TOO **GOOD** FOR
HIM.

GET
HIM **OUT**
OF
THERE.



DIDN'T THINK OF
THAT. I JUST
LIKED THE IDEA
OF HIM **WALLOWING**
IN HIS OWN
SHIT.

TAKE HIM AND LOCK
HIM IN A **CELL** WHILE WE
GATHER UP MATERIALS.
WE'LL THROW HIM OUT
OF A **GUARD TOWER**
WITH A **ROPE** AROUND
HIS NECK. THAT'LL
TAKE CARE OF
HIM.



I
WILL LET
THE **LORD**
BE YOUR
JUDGE.

I
WANT
YOU TO
KNOW
THAT I
FORGIVE
YOU.

HERSHEL--
WE'RE STILL
GOING TO
HANG
HIM.



I
KNOW.

I
WANT TO
WATCH.



I'M GOING TO
GO CHECK ON
MAGGIE. YOU
COOL?

YEAH, YOU'RE
COOL. GO ON.
I'M GOING TO
CHECK UP ON
CAROL TOO--
SEE HOW HER
AND SOPHIA
ARE DOING.



HEY,
MAGS. UM--
HOW ARE
YOU
HOLDING
UP?



I
DON'T
THINK I'M
GOING TO
LOVE YOU
ANYMORE.



WHAT'S
THE POINT?
YOU'RE JUST
GOING TO
DIE LIKE
EVERYONE
ELSE...



COME
ON--I'VE GOT
TO GET YOU
OUT OF HERE.
I CAN'T LET
THEM JUST
KILL YOU.



I
WON'T.

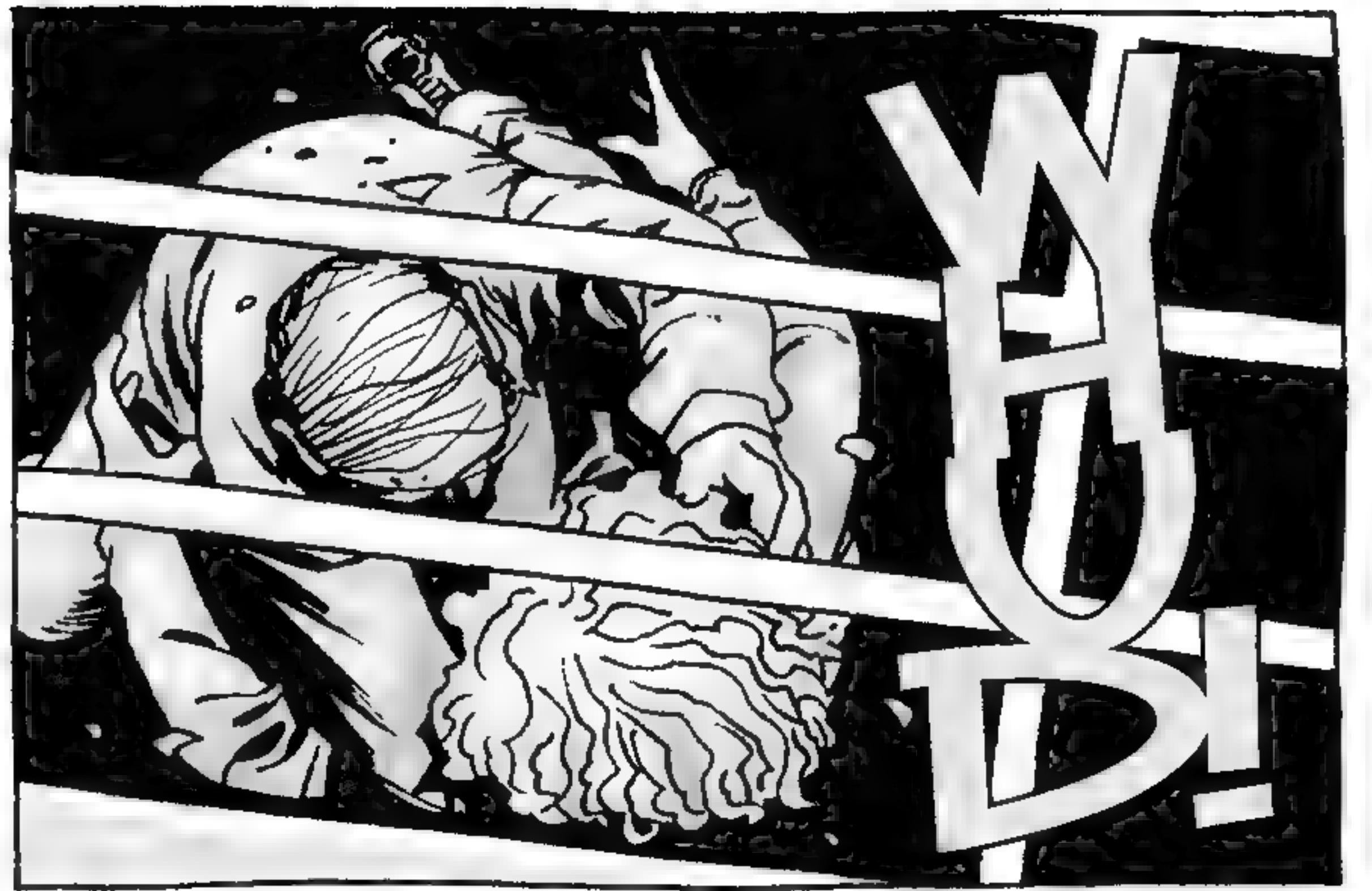


STAND UP.
WE'VE GOT
TO DO THIS
BEFORE
THEY COME
BACK.

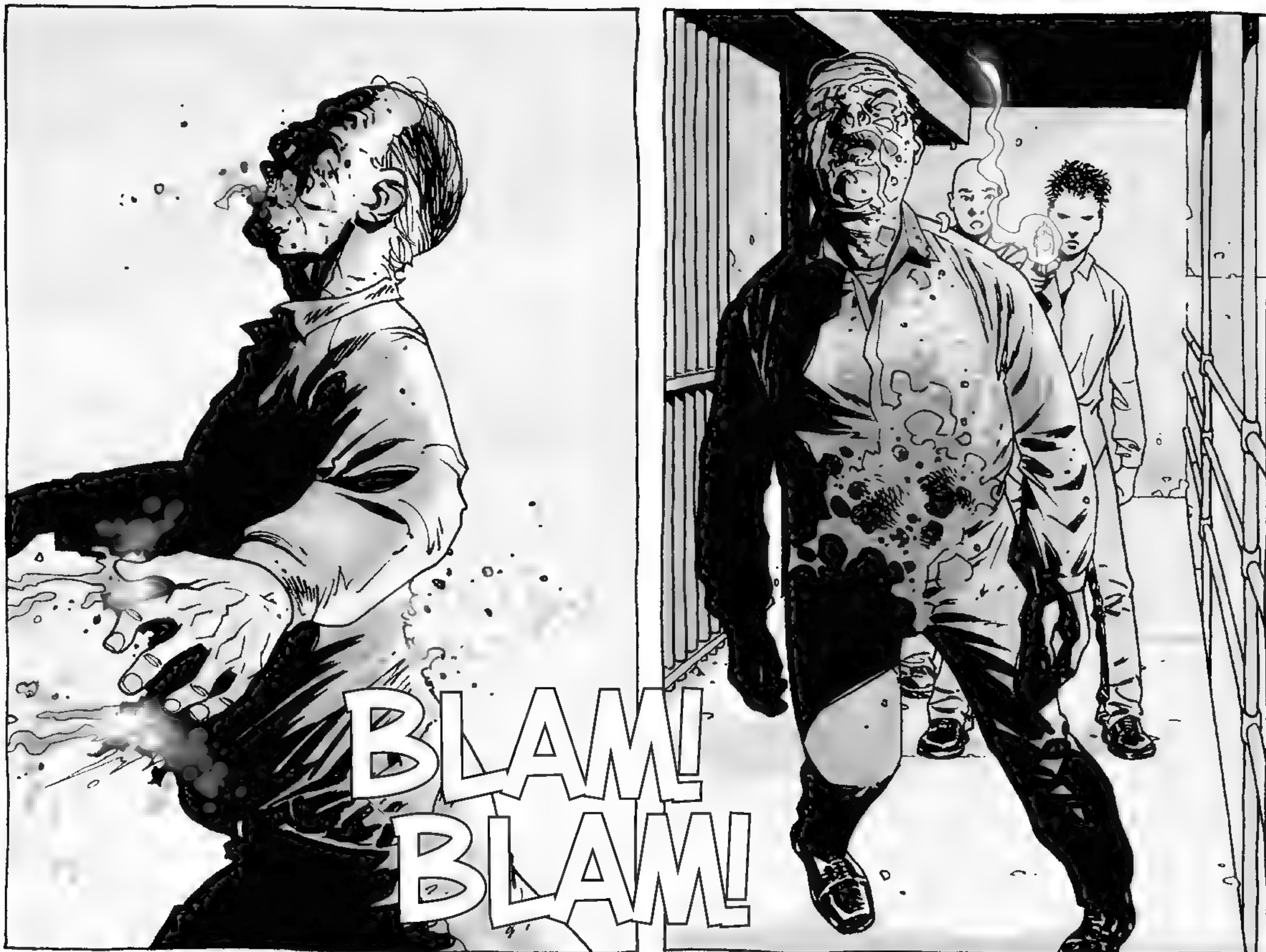


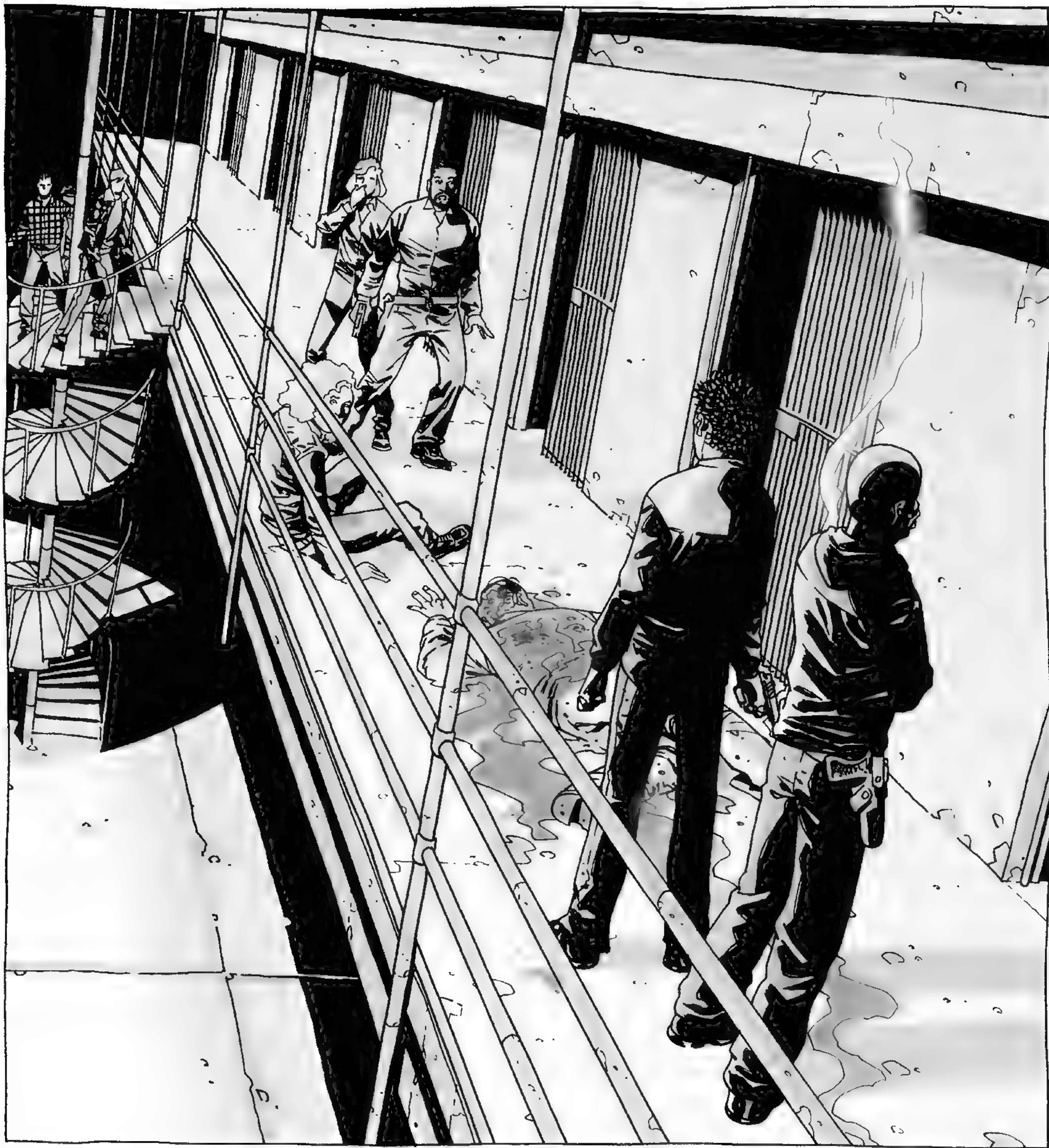
YOU'RE
CRAZY. NOT
EVIL. YOU
NEED
HELP.

WHAT
THEY WANT
TO DO TO
YOU IS
WRONG.



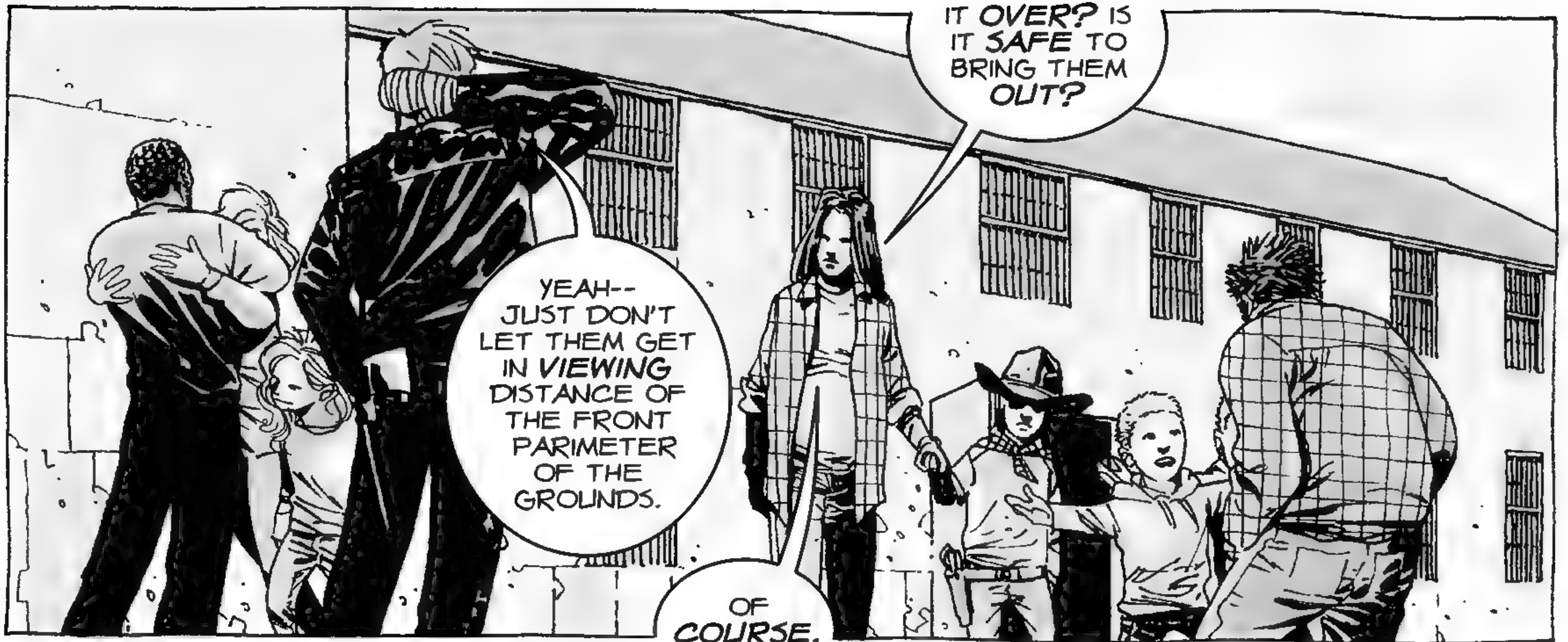














WHERE
DID YOU
GET THOSE
GUNS?

YOU AIN'T GOING
TO BE TALKING
TO **NOBODY**--OR
BOSSING **ANYONE**
AROUND, BIG MAN.
NOT AFTER
WE'RE
DONE.

JESUS!!
WHAT
ARE YOU
DOING?!



WHY ARE
YOU **DOING**
THIS?



IN CASE YOU AIN'T
NOTICED. YOU AIN'T IN A
POSITION TO ASK ME **SHIT**.
NOW **DROP** THAT
FUCKING GUN OR I'LL
BLOW YOUR BRAINS
ALL OVER YOUR
LITTLE **FAGGOT**
SON.

BITCH.





I'LL
MAKE THIS
REALLY
SIMPLE FOR
YOU, FARM
BOY.

WE
WERE HERE
FIRST--AND
YOU WORE
OUT YOUR
WELCOME
REAL
QUICK.

GET THE
FUCK
OUT OF MY
HOUSE.

LETTER HACKS

WRITE TO US AT:

WALKINGDEAD@FUNKOTRON.COM

Hello all, Sina Grace here.

Wow, what a way to end Charlie Adlard's twelfth issue as The Walking Dead artist. The great thing about revisiting this series week-in and week-out is watching his style evolve over the course of 75+ issues! Weekly!

Issue 18--the one that got away from me. This was a weird one. The way I write these things is in steps. I kick stuff around in my head for months jotting down notes here and there, then I sit down and I write a plot on paper--then I use that plot as a guideline while I type this sucker up in script form. Well, my plot for this issue and the script for this issue are almost entirely different. I had a major development planned for this issue, but the characters informed me they weren't ready--then Maggie wouldn't let me hang Hershel, then Dexter and Andrew wouldn't leave without a fight. It's hard to explain--I had things planned out--but as I typed the dialogue things changed, the characters took over and things went in other directions. It was kind of scary.

I hope it turned out okay. At least it looks pretty.

This wraps up the "Safety Behind Bars" arc and ends it with a cliffhanger (tee hee). Starting next month--more of the same!

Oh, and our letters page will be cut short this month to make room for the much requested character pages that will follow this letters page. HOORAY. Speaking of letters:

Dear Mr. Kirkman,

I am becoming more impressed with your ability to develop characters than I thought possible.

The bitterness between Rick and Lori adds even more tension to an already fragile situation and makes Lori a bit of an antagonist. I'm anxious to see how serious she was when she said, "I'm sick of him." I also found it poignant that Rick felt the need to reconcile with Shane. In every zombie/apocalypse story I've always wanted as much detail as possible, especially what was going through the minds of the individuals and that would motivate them.

Regarding motivation, what have you got against poor Herschel? His kids are getting whacked left and right. You're for guns right? And since Herschel is anti-gun you're making his life even more miserable. That's fine by me. I'd rather have a gun and not need it, than...you get the picture.

It's an interesting "who-dunnit" you've added as well. It's a matter of who knew where the barber-shop was and when they knew it. Inmates are first up obviously. And I'd mention the other character's by name, but they escape me. In time though, I'm sure the more you develop them (rather than whacking them left and right) I'll remember them as easily as Rick, Lori, and Herschel. Now that this is my second letter, I'll return to comic-book letter format, with questions.

1) Communication. Hasn't anyone at that prison thought of checking out a radio/transmitter to try to find out

what's going on in the rest of the world? Electricity is the only thing holding them back. Nearly all modern prisons have on-line access even.

2) Is Rick planning on returning to his hometown to invite the man and his son to comeback with him? I thought that was the first place he would head after going and getting Herschel and his family.

3) Everyone has been asking for one-shots to add to the back story. Have you considered introducing a new character by first starting with their back story (i.e. from the moment "all hell broke loose/to the present")?

4) Television. I'm sure you've seen the previews for "Sin City" and "A Scanner Darkly," or even seen "Sky Captain..." If you had final say on design for a television series based on TWD would you prefer those styles of "live-action" animation, or simply black & white & greys?

I'm really starting to enjoy the greys as much as the penciling. Too bad I can't remember the guys name who does that (I'm not typing this at home). But give him credit anyway.

Sincerely,
Merl Key

1) The haven't found a radio yet. Give them time. They really haven't had a chance to explore the prison at all.

2) It's a long way away--but it's not out of the question.

3) I don't really want to dilute the property with spin-offs. I'm not really into cashing in. Give me another month or so...

4) I'd prefer live action--it just seems more real.

Cliff appreciates the compliment, even though you forgot his name.

I've been reading The Walking Dead since issue 10. I bought the first trade and all other issues I could find to catch up.

I've been reading comics since 92' when I was 9, so I'm not going to lie to you and tell you this is first letter I wrote to a comic, but if it's printed or if I actually get a response than that will be a first for sure. (Though when I was 12 or possibly 13 I had it figured out, letters written to comic books go to the same place letters written to Santa go and haven't written a letter since.) I love the book, I really do, but I'm also not going to sit here and enumerate the reasons why, I think it would sully it somehow.

I will say that it is the reason I have a pull list at my comic book shop. Before this title came out I had no trouble getting an issue of anything, and now this sucker comes out and I have to get a pull list or else I'll miss an issue. Also, because of this book I've added Invincible and Marvel Team-Up to my pull list. My shop never seems to get Brit In, but I'm dying to read it. I read an interview someone did with you (It was linked by Tycho and Gabe (I don't know their real name... that's right nested parenthesis... it's a code monkey geek thing) of Penny-Arcade after they met you at a convention in

Seattle.) and it sparked my interested in that book but I can't find it anywhere, which is depressing.

Brit isn't currently being published but the three books that have been out for a while are available for sale at www.khepri.com so they should be relatively easy to find.

I am quite shocked that no one has pointed out that you have the best letters column in all of comicdom. I'm pretty sure it's the best letters column in my entire history of reading comic books. It's amazing that you are able to publish and actually answer that many letters in a month. Reading all of those letters takes me forever, but I'm determined to do it every month. Between the letters and covers I'll never settle for another TPB.

That's the idea.

Don't ever do color. Never. I somehow managed to convince my art teacher to let me do an independent study where I draw a comic book. Nothing fancy, nothing I'm ever going to try and sell, just something I'll put up on my website just so I could say I did it. Anyway she asked me to bring in samples of B&W comic book art I liked so I brought her Sin City and The Walking Dead. (Samples of both Moore and Adlard) She asked me what I liked about the Walking Dead, and I told her "I like that it's pretty... and has zombies... cause zombies rock." I tried to convince her she should read it but once I started explaining the storyline to her she just looked at me like I was weird... more so than she normally does, which when you are dealing with a hippie art teacher is really quite the accomplishment. Consequently - in case you were wondering - when she asked me what I liked about Sin City and I told her, "I like that it's not pretty."

In response to a letter I read in Issue 15:
See Simon Pegg isn't actually rich. When he writes you telling you that he's making millions and billions, well that's a desperate cry for help cause he's actually poor. You have to realize that when you take American dollars and convert them to British pounds a million American dollars is the equivalent of roughly 45 pounds or something. That's hardly enough to buy a video game. Poor guy. I hear he is supposedly making a sequel to Shaun of the Dead though so yay for that. I totally need to get a cricket bat now because of that movie.

Don't let his appearance fool you. That limey brit is RICH!

In response to a letter I read in Issue 16:
Bikers are good people, not all of them are alcoholics. From age 7 on up I would hang out with my uncle's biker gang and most of them wouldn't touch booze, so much so they had their monthly meetings at donut shops and drank coffee. He was in a biker gang comprised of Vietnam Vets, and trust me when I say these guys could survive an apocalypse. If they could survive a war I'm sure they could survive an apocalypse longer than most. I highly doubt they'd turn into dicks afterwards and start gutting people for no reason.

You've been duped. I'm telling you. That WASN'T coffer and those WEREN'T donuts. Show me a sober biker and I'll show you a leprechaun.

This might seem a little scatterbrained, but I'm trying to get a lot of ideas out here, I've been meaning to write you for a while but I think that's everything. You keep writing, I'll keep buying and reading.

- Jesse Mrozowski

So I'm responding INSIDE the letters now. BIG DEAL. The way Bendis does it in Powers makes the letters and responses really easy to follow. There's nothing wrong with copying his style. It works for Brubaker.

Hey Robert!
I know we've already talked several times but here's a formal note for your Letter Hacks column. TWD is, after all, my current favourite comic and has been since the first issue so it's about time I wrote in. First off, I should say on record that you've got one of the most solid stories about the living dead that I've read since Matheson's I Am Legend. High praise indeed but you've earned it because you've got an engaging story and then you have gore, in that order, something a great deal of

filmmakers and writers are sorely misunderstanding these days. And yes, I know I Am Legend is about vampires but it is the genesis of all modern zombie movies since George Romero has openly stated he stole the idea for Night of the Living Dead from Matheson's novel. It's about the dead coming back to life inexplicably and infecting and consuming the living, now let's move on.

So if Romero stole from Matheson and I'm stealing from Romero...that makes it okay... doesn't it?

Storytelling is all about character. I Am Legend is about Robert Neville. The undead are, of course, a massive part of it, but they are secondary to the one human element. Now, don't get me wrong, my license plate says ZOMBIES and I have a Day of the Dead tattoo sleeve on my entire right arm and I love gore more than the average person but zombie tales are, ahem, brainless unless you care about the characters. In fact, there was an entire issue without any zombie action at all and I daresay anyone even noticed; that's the sign of a solid story. This would also be the difference between Romero's Dawn of the Dead and Snyder's MTV-style, undead epileptic fit of a remake. The latter boasts too many one-line-spouting fist-magnets that no one could give a fuck about whereas, in Romero's flick, the audience genuinely freaked when Roger got his leg chomped climbing into the truck with Peter, for example.

Your book succeeds where Snyder's movie didn't in my opinion, it manages to introduce new characters frequently, but you seem to always understand their purpose. Or maybe you don't and figure it out as you go along, but nevertheless, no characters are ever wasted. **(I think you're forgetting Rachel and Susie)** And when they are, they're wasted in style! **(oh, never mind)** I should say, whoever this slasher is that's decapitating little girls in your comic at the moment echoes another brand of horror beyond the zombie sub-genre and, quite frankly, I'm surprised and very pleased about it. In a world that's overrun by monsters, they're trapped inside with the human variety - the most unsettling kind. Very nice.

My point is, your book is never predictable and more fun than any zombie movie I've seen since Day of the Dead, and that's saying a lot, since the competition's been heavy and Day of the Dead is the Mount Rushmore of zombie flicks. In short, Right. The. Fuck. On.

Love and buckets of blood,

Jovanka (Jen) Vuckovic
Managing Editor
RUE MORGUE MAGAZINE

Good to hear from you, Jen. I've gotta say I disagree. I think Shaun of the Dead is the most fun, entertaining, and compelling zombie ANYTHING since Day of the Dead. Although, I think you may be a bit more of an expert on the subject, so what do I know?

Hi bob

You sly goose! After reading the end of Walking Dead 16 it surprised me that Thomas WAS the murderer, I thought it would have been too obvious for it to be him but there it was. I also suspected Dale since he decapitated a zombie with a axe in issue 3 and lost his wife before he was introduced but he looks to be just what he is a generous elderly old man.

It's good that you have no plans to show any origin to the plague because that is besides the point, the point should always be story and characters it would be good to hear their theories though its likely they'd asked why in the beginning.

I am really pleased you made it clear that ALL deceased with brain matter turn into zombies, thanks to Resident Evil, 28 Days Later and Dawn Remake people always assume its a infectious plague passed on by bites. I think it starts out where all the dead rise and then months or years later, the zombies still exist, their bites still turn you but the dead stay as good old inanimate corpses.

Dan

See, I was right--it was so obvious... I fooled you. Sigh. I'll try harder next time--I promise.

Man!

It's fun to be following a monthly book again. I haven't had any comics to look forward to on a regular basis since I was maybe 14. So you had to go and make it the accountant. I had my heart set on some vicious serial-killer type hiding out in another wing of the prison just collecting zombie heads for company. Oh well. Please please please, when the bandits or other living bad-guys or whoever

(bikers are kind of played out, though) show up, give them weird zombie-body-part trophies. Like necklaces of animate heads. That would be fucked up. Talk to Adlard about it. I wanna see him draw that. Speaking of Adlard, the last page of issue 15 was one of the single most affecting images in the series so far, as good as the panel where Rick and Glenn go into Atlanta and encounter all those zombies piled around the tank. I remember his X-Files work. He's gotten incredible. So some quick, conveniently numbered suggestions for how you should be doing your job (besides the above)-

1. Can we see a zombie Donna? Or is there enough of her left?
2. Child Zombies. I think I saw one in #16, but it could've been a midget...
3. Give Carl more opportunities to use his gun. He's a good shot.
4. Seriously, the popular demand seems to be mounting. Have the guys loot an abandoned Wal-Mart.
5. Kill off somebody important soon. In the shittiest way possible. I mean it. Make us all cry.

Thanks for the legitimate reason to start hanging around comic shops again.

Ian Dennis,

1. This isn't the kind of book where dead characters keep popping up as zombies. Who KNOWS what happened to Donna...or Jim. I'd rather not see them again.

2. They're around... you just have to keep an eye out for them.

3. That kid's just lucky. He'll be shooting his gun again, eventually.

4. We'll see.

5. Tyreese falls in the Sarlac pit next issue, promise.

Dear Funk Gang,

I climbed on board the walking dead bandwagon with issue # 8. Now that I am up to issue # 16, it's still great to be on board. Great artwork, covers, and stories in them all!

I would like to talk briefly about the covers by Tony Moore. From an artistic point-of-view, I feel that issues 8, 9, and 16 are the best so far. Issue #8; You show us the effect of ice and snow on zombies. I cannot recall any media, including movies and comics, that deals with this area. Very nice thoughts! By the way, the simple, open design of this cover caught my eye on the comic rack. Issue #9: A reflection in a zombie eye-beautiful idea! The eye is scratched, glazed over, covered with decay and a big fly....yummy! It looks like Rick is getting sneaked up from behind by this zombie. Issue # 16: Best illustration of zombies...period! I noticed something usually forgotten in Zombie drawings. The fingers, fingernails, teeth, mouth, and upper shirt are covered in a brownish, reddish color. This means they found some previously "alive" folk sometime in the past to munch on...nice inclusion. The rest of their bodies are done well with pale blue skin and pale eyes. I loved the details of flies swarming them too.

As far as the artwork inside (by Charlie)...wonderful! Charlie's work in issue #16 is showing some new twists. More facial expressions, viewpoints, and even more contrasts. He is really starting to find his niche and personalize these characters. I love it.

As far as Thomas Richards being the, um, "head-cutter" in #16...no surprise there Robert. It's always the quiet, polite ones, ain't it? He wasn't in prison for tax fraud was he... probably more like serial killing? Just goes to show Rick's gang probably should do a more thorough background check next time before staying with a new group.

Let's hope...

I always get worried that the stories will get boring and I will lose interest in buying new ones. This has almost happened a few times. The group starts talking (blah,blah,blah), the group gets angry at each

other(blah,blah,blah!), someone gets killed (ho-hum). Some new ideas come in though to keep me reading... yeah! In short, keep up the good work. Okay....now for some interesting thoughts:

1. Even if zombies could happen, rigormortis (which is where the blood pools up in the lowest part of the body after death because it no longer pumps through the body's system) would set in. This means the muscles would seize up and eventually lose all mobility. Sorry guys...no moving zombie is possible.

1. You can't pick and choose what's realistic and what's not. In my book once the dead is up and walking, it's all thrown out the window. Who KNOWS how that works. Rigormortis doesn't seem to be a problem.

2. When you get to issue # 75 and start to write in the purple aliens with laser beams, don't forget the other nice suggestions: A. Talking Owls B. Invincible "crossovers" C. Tyreese flying like a helicopter In fact, put them all in a wrestling ring "death match" with a tag team of zombies. My money is on the talking owls....that would be a "hoot" if they win.

2. A "hoot!" GROAN! Actually, I think the suggestion was Tyreese FLYING a helicopter, but seeing him fly LIKE a helicopter seems much more interesting. I am counting the days until issue 75.

3. I guess I am the only one who bought the "Dawn of the Dead" remake. Zombie's that run? Zombie's that climb and jump? Zombies that increase in population to thousands and thousands? Now that's really scary! C'mon, admit it...you guys feel these new zombies would upset your "fantasy world". No more walking around and shooting slow witted zombies and raiding shopping malls at leisure. Too bad!

Till the next zombie attack.....

Tracy Kent

3. You don't have a chance with running zombies. It's better if the hero has a chance. I don't HATE running zombies, I just prefer the slow ones. Besides, how would they move that well with rigormortis and all that?

Dear Robert,

Well, first we get the general praise out of the way. I jumped on board with the first two trades (bought them both together, thanks to their fabulously low price), and I've bought every issue since. It has bumped Ex Machina from my favorite slot, and has inserted itself firmly into my all time favorite list. Every issue I've read has evoked a strong emotional response from me, something that is becoming increasingly rare across all forms of storytelling. Your dialogue is masterful, and "sounds" very real.

Now, on to more specific praise. Issue #16, while not my favorite (issue #14 holds that honor), was still absolutely fantastic. I was happy beyond words to see that Tyreese survived, and his speech about his daughter nearly brought a tear to my eye. I was also "pleased" to see that I had guessed the identity of the decapitator correctly. (COME ON, who DIDN'T?) I knew that creepy Thomas was up to no good the moment I laid eyes on him. I guess I should be used to these heart stopping cliffhangers by now, but they keep catching me off guard.

Special kudos to you for your excellent characterization. Most people will list Tyreese or Rick as their favorites, but mine go a little more offbeat. My faves are Carl and Sophia. The scene where Sophia asks Carl to be her boyfriend was so cute it made me physically weak.

I bet you like Disney movies too, don't you?

Please keep up the great book, I'll buy it for as long as you keep cranking them out.

-Brian Clark
Chicago, IL

P.S. - Lighten up on Herschel, will you? You've been a real son a bitch to him.

Hershel's almost out of kids, so one way or another he's bound to stop losing them y'know? I think things will be looking up for Hershel real soon, but

that's probably a lie.

Dear Letter Hacks,

I was out of the comic book world for about 10 years until I picked up Wizard Magazine 160 and read their article on TWD. That weekend, I made the trip into town to see if the local comics store had any issues. The kid behind the counter handed me both the paper trades. I read them both that night, fell in love with the story, the art and the characters. Later that week, I read them again at work. I proceeded to go back to the store, bought issue 14, ordered 13 and signed up to have the book pulled for me when they come out.

I can honestly say that I am hooked and find myself wondering what will happen next. I have my roommate hooked and even the girlfriend is reading the book now.

The art in this book is like none I have ever experienced before. When the action hits I find myself reading faster. When the book slows, I read slower. I can really make a connection.

One thing I don't understand is why Hershel is getting such a hard time from your readers? There the guy is, on his own property, wife gone, an undead son in the barn, 10 mouths to feed, a limited amount of food and his not so bright neighbor shoots some kid. He did what was morally right in the situation and saved his life. He even allowed a group of very hungry strangers stay on his property, feeding them, and keeping them relatively safe while the boy healed up. Then they have a zombie wander by and the hotshot cop wants to kill it while Hershel believes that it can be saved. The man proceeds to lose two more of his kids and if that's not enough the hotshot cop thinks he's a permanent resident and start making demands to just move in on the food and family that Hershel has obviously worked his whole life to attain.

See, Hershel's not a bad guy. I think he's got more than enough reader sympathy these days, though.

I really felt for the guy and never thought that Rick and his group were welcome the whole time. Why they thought they were, seemed a bit selfish.

I like how Hershel managed to bounce back mentally, apologize to Rick and decided to come to the prison with everyone. He even starts to work on the soil to plant food to feed everyone. Then the guy loses two more children. I'm surprised the poor guy hasn't snapped yet! I love the Hershel character, he seems like one of the more realistic of the bunch, I hope he's around for a while. Someone has to think long term and he knows how to grow food, I hope the others realize this.

A couple questions...

1) Why doesn't anyone seem to think about using propane grills? We always see people building a fire to cook their food or just not cooking at all. Propane grills and propane should be easy to find and it's a great way to cook. You'd think that there would have been one on the camper...

Dale was all out of propane and they haven't been able to find more.

2) Why don't we see people reading more educational books? I know that if I were in the situation I would be trying to find as much information as I could that may come in useful. Survival guides, farming, delivering a baby, first aid, etc.

They haven't found a bookstore yet--if only the prison had a library...

3) Are they going to make an ammo run anytime soon? When Rick and Glen made their run into Atlanta, they filled up a shopping cart and had to ditch that. How many guns and how much ammo could they really carry while running for their lives? Then they had to teach everyone how to shoot, which would have eaten up all kinds of ammo. You touched on this after they cleared their way into prison, but they have got to be almost out of bullets.

Keep up the great work!

Thanks,
Mike Gineman

3) They are, in fact, almost out of bullets, which I think has been mentioned a couple times by now. Although, if you're recall, Glenn and Rick made it out of Atlanta with most of the ammo they took.

Dear Robert Kirkman,

I just got into comics last year, when I picked up some trades on a whim. I heard a lot of great things about the Walking Dead, and ended up buying the first two trades in December. I inhaled them, and have been reading the individual issues since 13, anxiously awaiting my next fix. You had me worried with issue 15, leaving me hanging on the fate of my favorite character, Tyreese. Thankfully you gave him the coolest moment so far in the series when Rick finds him in issue 16. I was a little disappointed that you revealed the killer so soon, I was looking forward to the tension building as more people are dying and accusations are flying. However I'm completely confident that the direction you're taking the story will be far more exciting.

Like many other fans I was a little disappointed in Charlie Adlard's replacement of Tony Moore. At first glance Adlard's art seems simpler and duller. However over these past 10 issues with Adlard on board, I have come to really appreciate his storytelling abilities. Take for example issue 14, bottom half of page 4, where the inmates are confessing their crimes. With these four panels Adlard is able to fully convey each of the inmates' personalities. In fact the way he draws their eyes pretty much sums them up. That is talent.

I have a couple of questions on the series, hopefully they haven't already been asked:

1. Any chance of Adlard, Rathburn, or Moore making an appearance in Letter Hacks, commenting on and answering questions related to the art?

These things are done so last minute it would be impossible to grab them on a whim, but if there were ever a specific question for them I'd probably hunt them down for an answer.

2. How much of what you have planned for the characters and story do you share with your artists? Are they finding out as they receive your scripts, or do you tell them everything you have planned?

I chat with Charlie and Cliff on the phone about the grand scheme of things from time to time. They know most of the big stuff that's going to happen. Most of the little stuff that happens in the issues isn't even known to me until I finish the script so they're not kept in the dark very long.

3. Which deceased character would you most like to still be able to write about?

Isaac Milton

I have no regrets. I liked Jim a lot, but hey... it was his time to go.

And that's it for letters folks! I hope you're happy, because I finally sat down and made those goddamn character sheets for you. Now you can totally look at characters faces and see their names under them. I probably won't be running this every issue, because taking up six pages in every issue with this seems kinda stupid, but we'll be running updated versions from time to time. ENJOY!

See you next month!

-Robert

CHARACTERS



RICK

status: alive

Rick was a small town cop before the zombie plague hit. He has become the leader of the group he has sought refuge with.

relations:
LORI (wife)
CARL (son)



SHANE

status: dead

Shane was Rick's partner. An unhealthy infatuation for Lori drove him insane. He eventually tried to kill Rick, but was shot by Carl moments before he could pull the trigger.

relations:
none

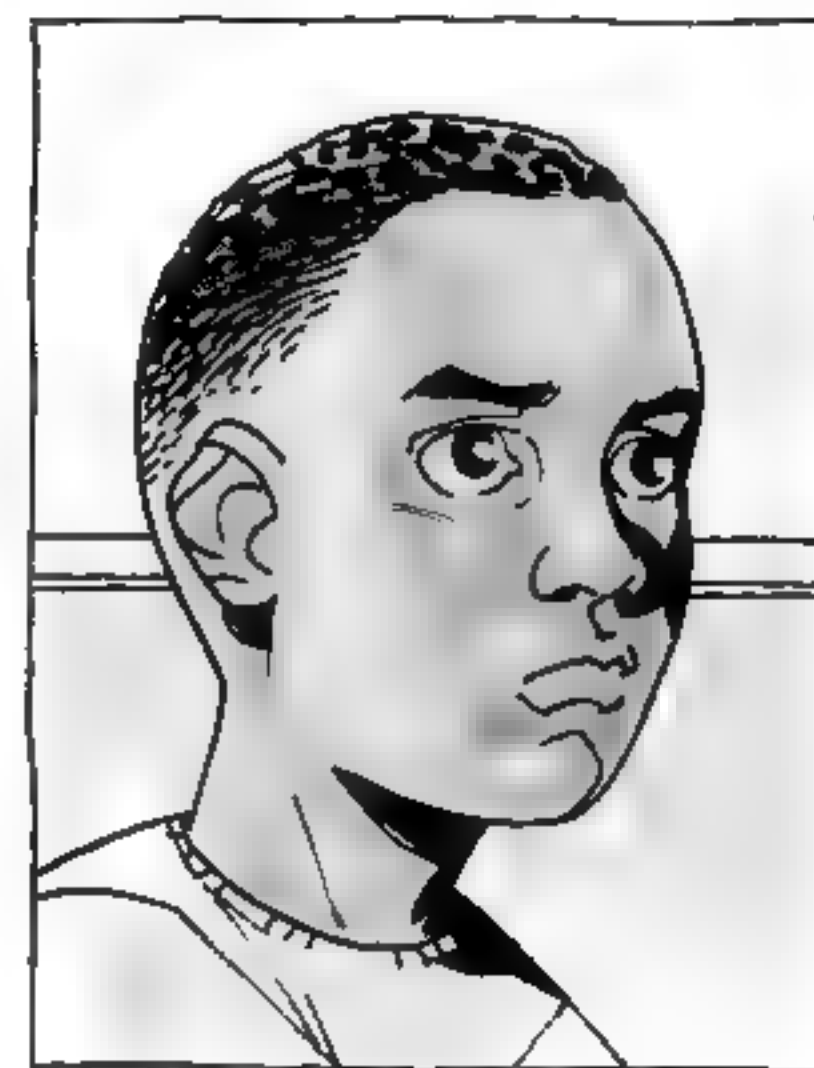


MORGAN

status: unknown

Morgan and his son Duane have taken up residence in Rick's old neighbor's house. Little is known of their current whereabouts.

relations:
DUANE (son)



DUANE

status: unknown

Duane and his father have taken up residence in Rick's old neighbor's house. Duane likes to talk about bodily functions.

relations:
MORGAN (father)

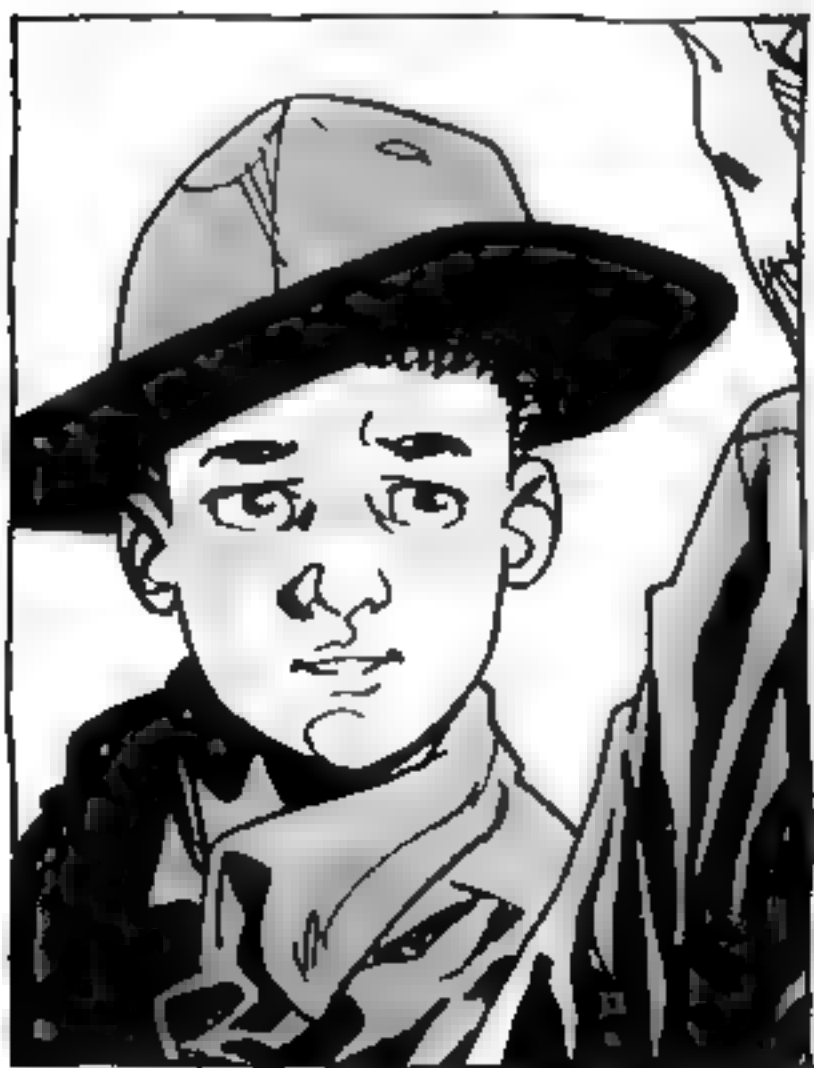


LORI

status: alive

Lori had an affair with Rick's partner Shane and is now pregnant. It is unknown who the child's father is. Rick is unaware of the affair.

relations:
RICK (husband)
CARL (son)

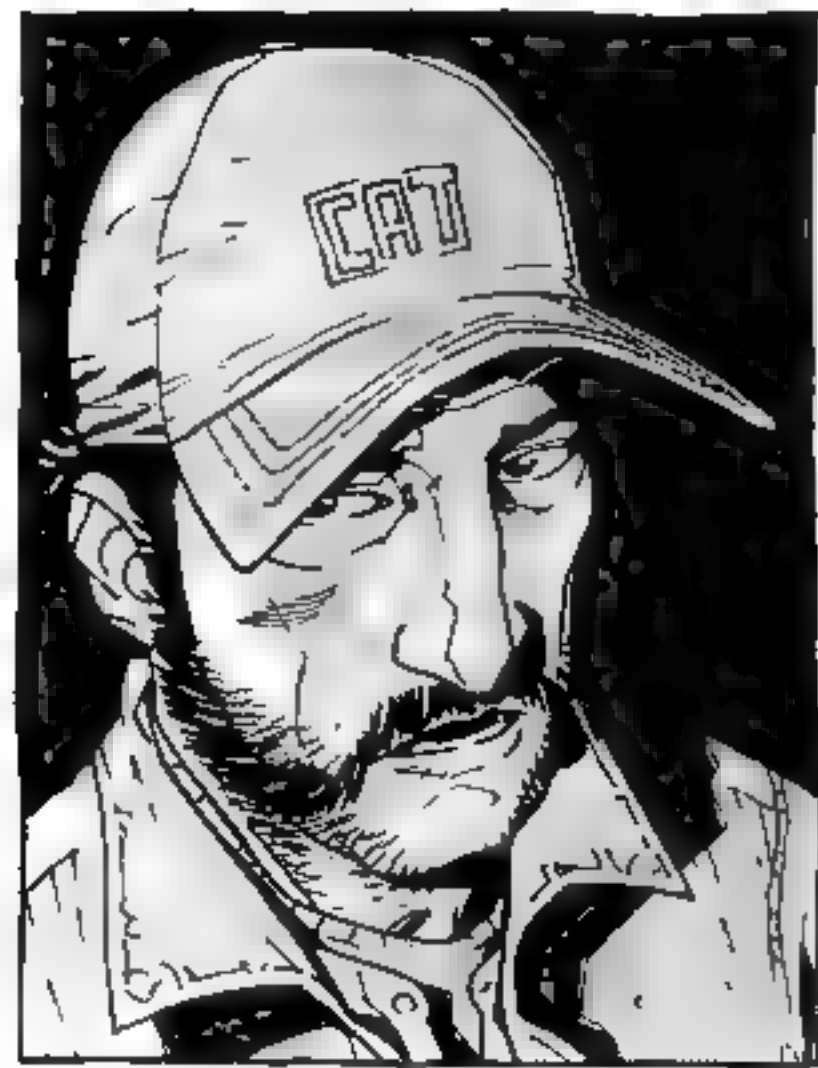


CARL

status: alive

Carl has saved his father's life but in doing so he has killed a man. The incident still weighs heavy on his conscience.

relations:
RICK (father)
LORI (mother)
SOPHIA (girlfriend)



JIM

status: dead

Jim watched his entire family get slaughtered as he escaped Atlanta. He was the first in the camp to die of a zombie bite.

relations:
none



ALLEN

status: alive

Allen is still haunted by the death of his wife. His grief is so severe he has begun to neglect his children.

relations:
DONNA (wife)
BEN & BILLY (sons)



DONNA

status: dead

Donna was the most outspoken person in the camp. She was killed by zombies in Wilshire Estates.

relations:
ALLEN (husband)
BEN & BILLY (sons)



BEN & BILLY

status: alive

Twin sons of Allen and Donna. They really don't say much. Especially after the death of their mother.

relations:
ALLEN (father)
DONNA (mother)



GLENN

status: alive

Glenn was the camp scavenger, always venturing into Atlanta in search of goods. He had a crush on Carol but is now with Maggie, Hershel's daughter.

relations:
MAGGIE (girlfriend)



DALE

status: alive

After losing his wife Dale met up with Amy and Andrea on his way to Atlanta. After Amy's death he and Andrea fell in love.

relations:
ANDREA (girlfriend)

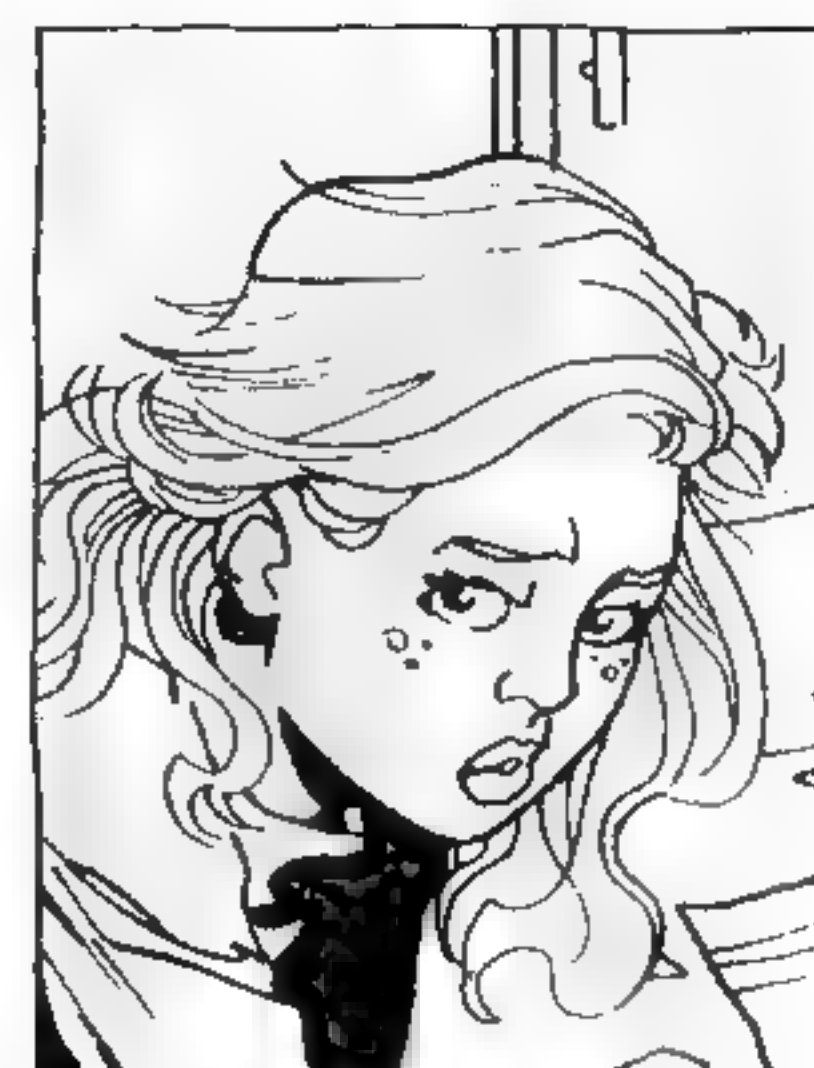


CAROL

status: alive

Carol is insecure and very timid. She and Lori have become close friends. She is currently with Tyreese.

relations:
SOPHIA (daughter)
TYREESE (boyfriend)



SOPHIA

status: alive

After a long period of constant nagging, Sophia has convinced Carl to be her boyfriend. They hold hands.

relations:
CAROL (mother)
CARL (boyfriend)



ANDREA

status: alive

Andrea is the resident sharp shooter of the group. After watching her sister die, she's found comfort in the arms of Dale.

relations:
AMY (sister)
DALE (boyfriend)

CHARACTERS



AMY

status: dead

Andrea's fun loving younger sister. Died in Atlanta during the zombie attack where Jim was bitten.

relations:
ANDREA (sister)



TYREESE

status: alive

Tyreese has become a valuable member of the group after helping Rick during many zombie attacks. He's taking his daughter's death surprisingly well.

relations:
JULIE (daughter)
CAROL (girlfriend)



JULIE

status: dead

Julie and her boyfriend Chris formed a suicide pact in order to be together forever. Chris shot first and killed her before she could kill him.

relations:
TYREESE (father)
CHRIS (boyfriend)



CHRIS

status: dead

Chris was killed at the hands of Tyreese shortly after killing his daughter, Julie in a failed suicide attempt. Only Rick knows.

relations:
JULIE (girlfriend)



OTIS

status: alive

Otis was living on Hershel's farm for safety. He has stayed behind to take care of the livestock while preparations are being made to move them to the prison.

relations:
PATRICIA (ex-girlfriend)



HERSHEL

status: alive

After witnessing the deaths of nearly all of his children, he's not in a very good state of mind.

relations:
SHAWN, ARLNOLD,
BILLY (sons)
LACEY, MAGGIE,
RACHEL,
SUSIE (daughters)



MAGGIE

status: alive

Hershel's only living daughter. Currently involved with Glenn.

relations:
HERSHEL (father)
SHAWN, ARLNOLD,
BILLY (brothers)
LACEY, RACHEL,
SUSIE (sisters)



BILLY

status: alive

Hershel's only living son.

relations:
HERSHEL (father)
SHAWN, ARLNOLD,
(brothers)
LACEY, MAGGIE,
RACHEL,
SUSIE (sisters)



LACEY

status: dead

Hershel's eldest daughter. Killed by the zombies he kept in his barn.

relations:
HERSHEL (father)
SHAWN, ARLNOLD,
BILLY (brothers)
MAGGIE, RACHEL,
SUSIE (sisters)



ARNOLD

status: dead

Hershel's second eldest son. Killed by his zombie brother, Shawn who Hershel kept in their barn.

relations:
HERSHEL (father)
SHAWN, BILLY (brothers)
LACEY, MAGGIE, RACHEL,
SUSIE (sisters)



RACHEL

status: dead

Hershel's second youngest daughter. Killed by Thomas, in the prison barber shop.

relations:
HERSHEL (father)
SHAWN, ARNOLD,
BILLY (brothers)
LACEY, MAGGIE,
SUSIE (sisters)



SUSIE

status: dead

Hershel's youngest daughter. Killed by Thomas, in the prison barber shop.

relations:
HERSHEL (father)
SHAWN, ARNOLD,
BILLY (brothers)
LACEY, MAGGIE,
RACHEL (sisters)



PATRICIA

status: alive

Otis' bleeding heart ex-girlfriend. Had a crush on Thomas. She's very misguided.

relations:
OTIS (ex-boyfriend)



AXEL

status: alive

One of the left over convicts from the prison. In for armed robbery. Little else is known.

relations:
none



THOMAS

status: dead

Serial killer. Killed Rachel and Susie, and attempted to kill Andrea before Rick beat him nearly to death and Maggie shot him.

relations:
none

CHARACTERS



ANDREW

status: unknown
Another convict, in for drug possession, selling, etc. Fell in love with Dexter, his cellmate.

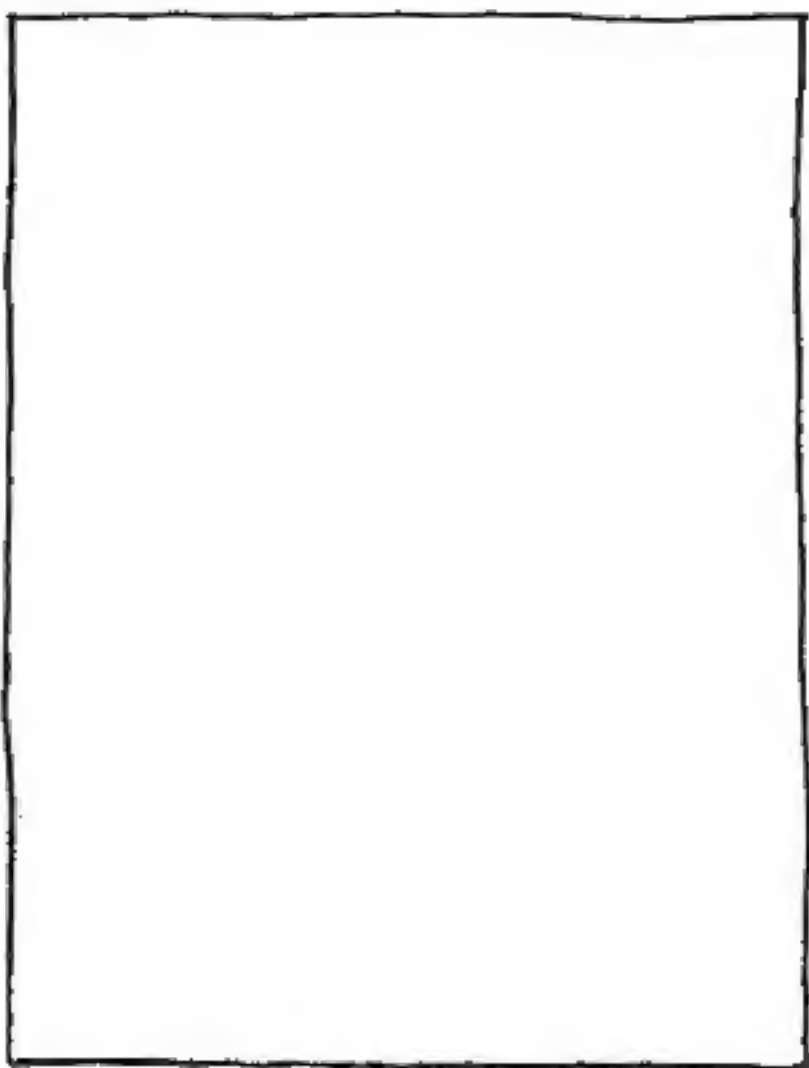
relations:
DEXTER (boyfriend)



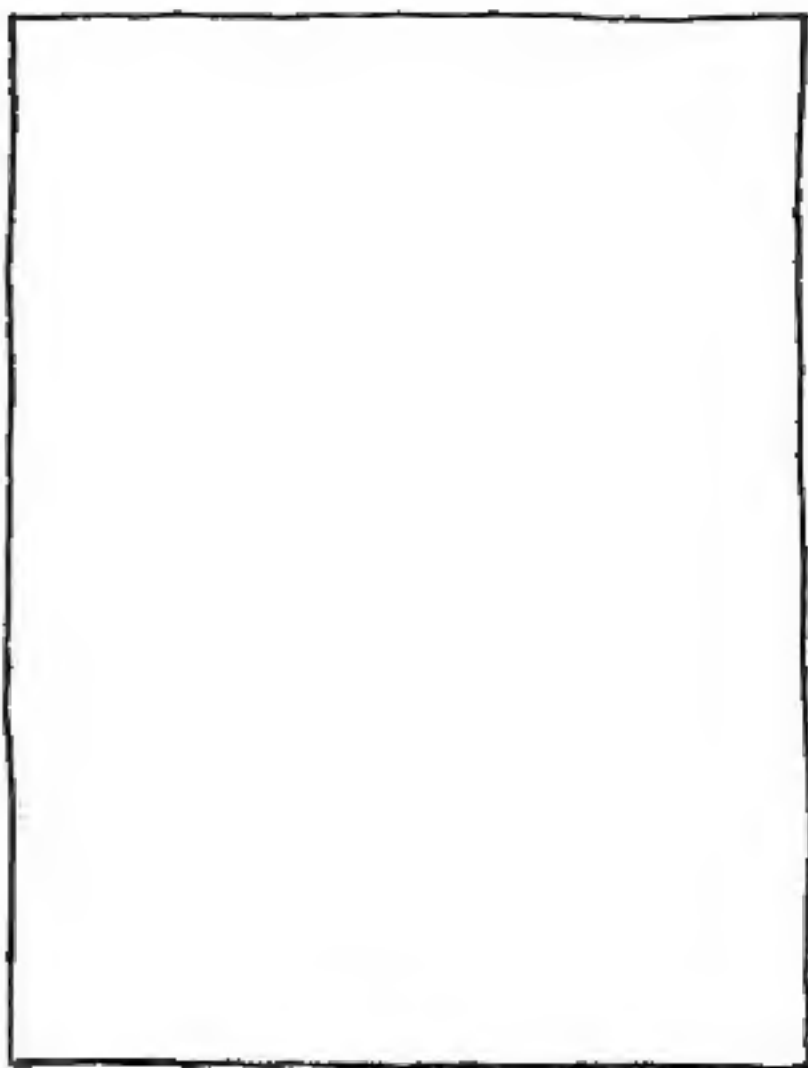
DEXTER

status: dead
Another convict, in for murdering his wife and her lover. Finds comfort in the arms of Andrew, his cellmate.

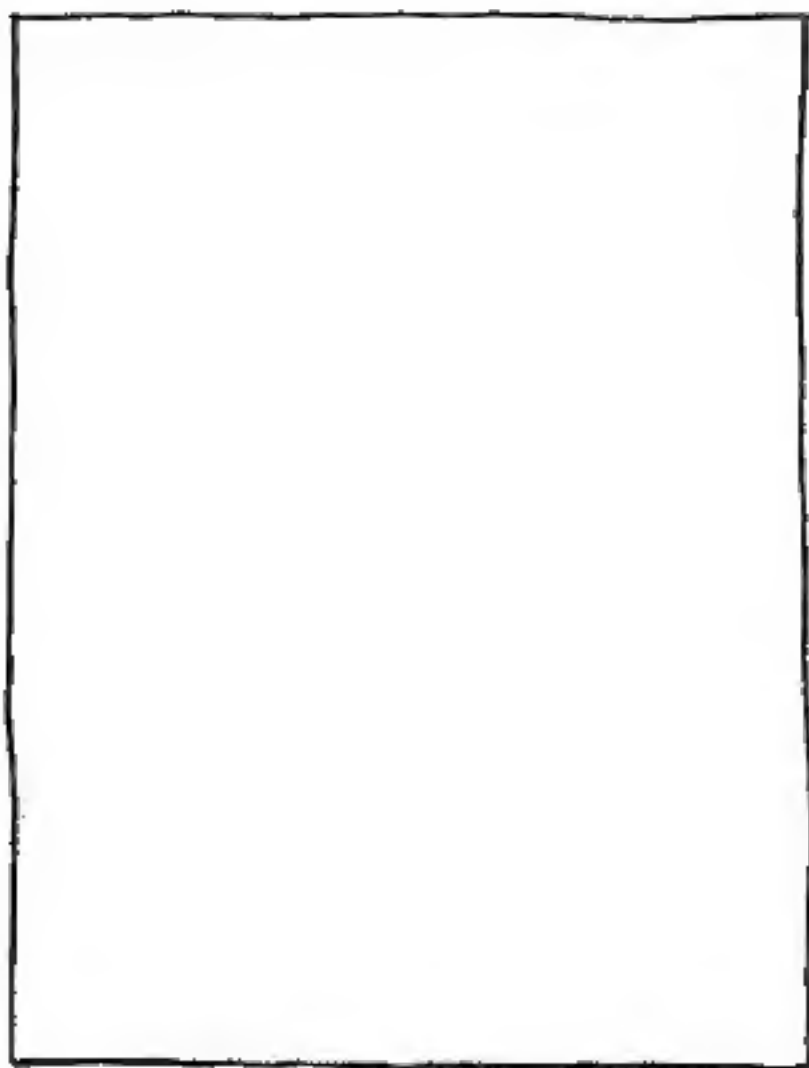
relations:
ANDREW (boyfriend)



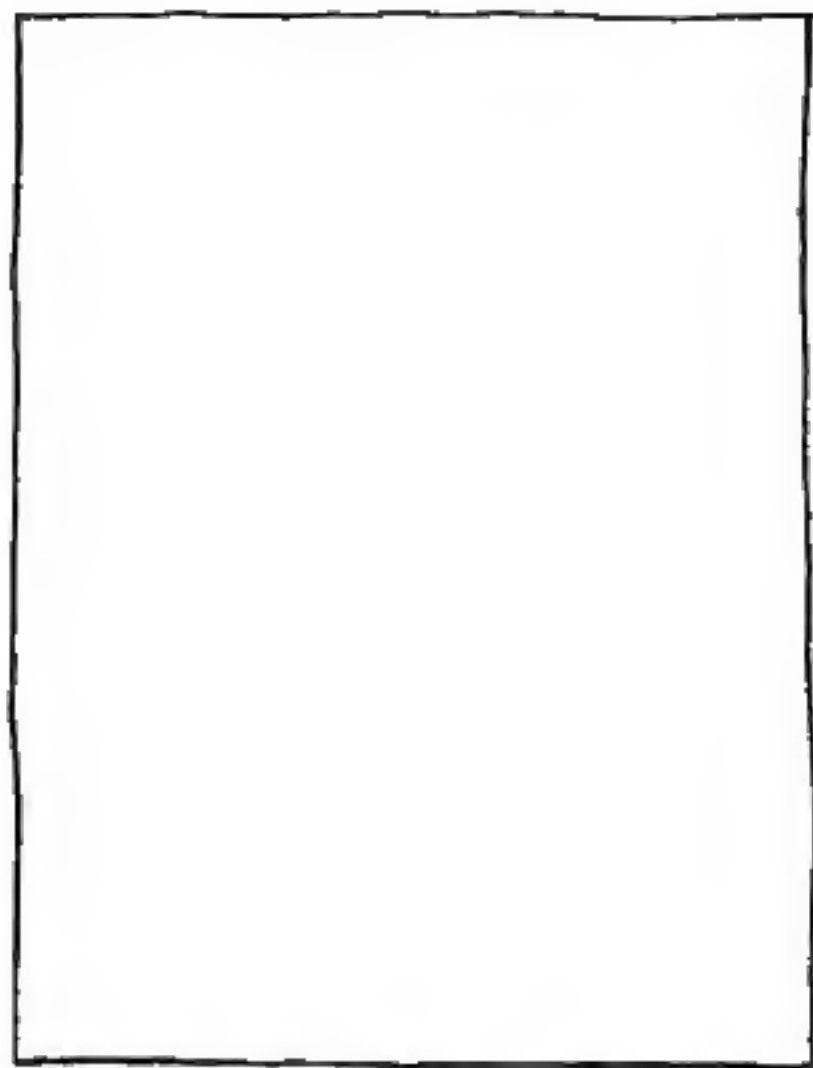
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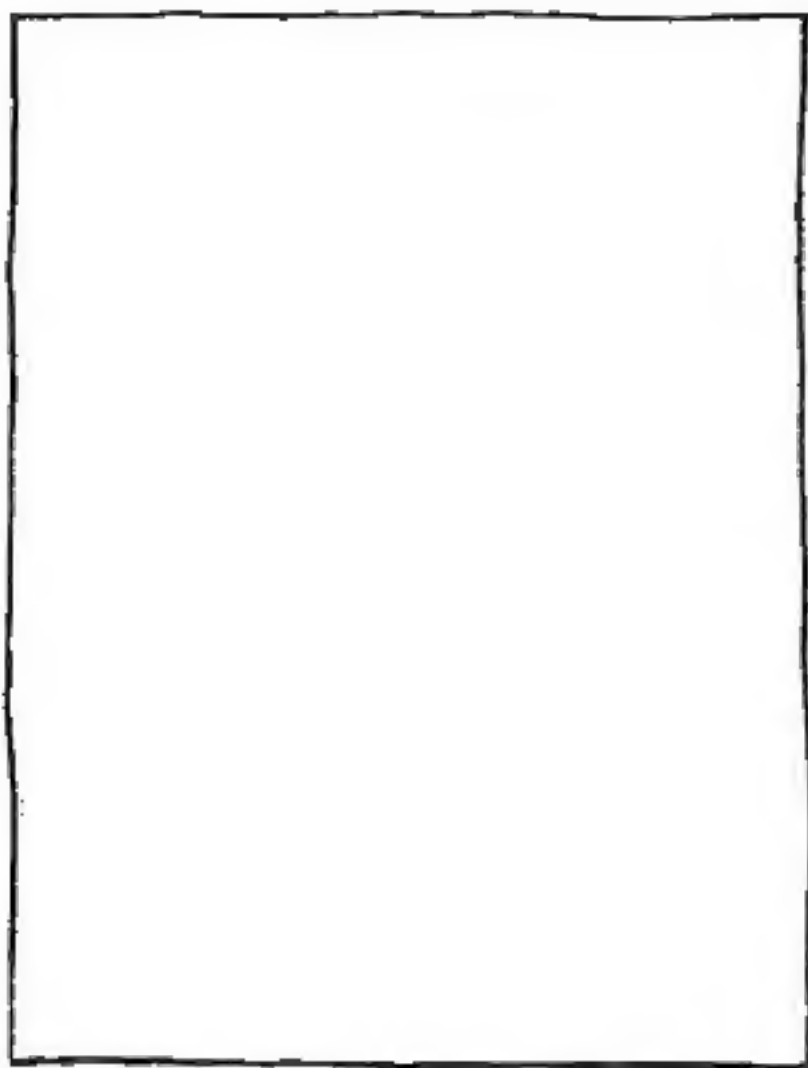
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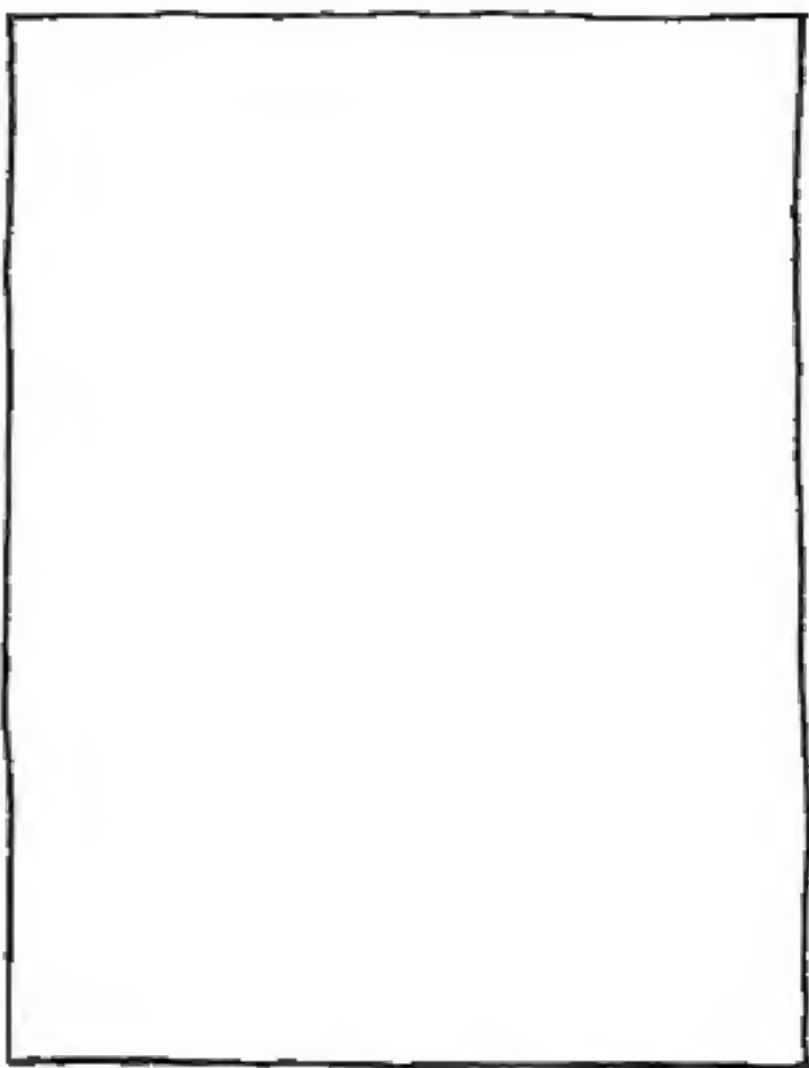
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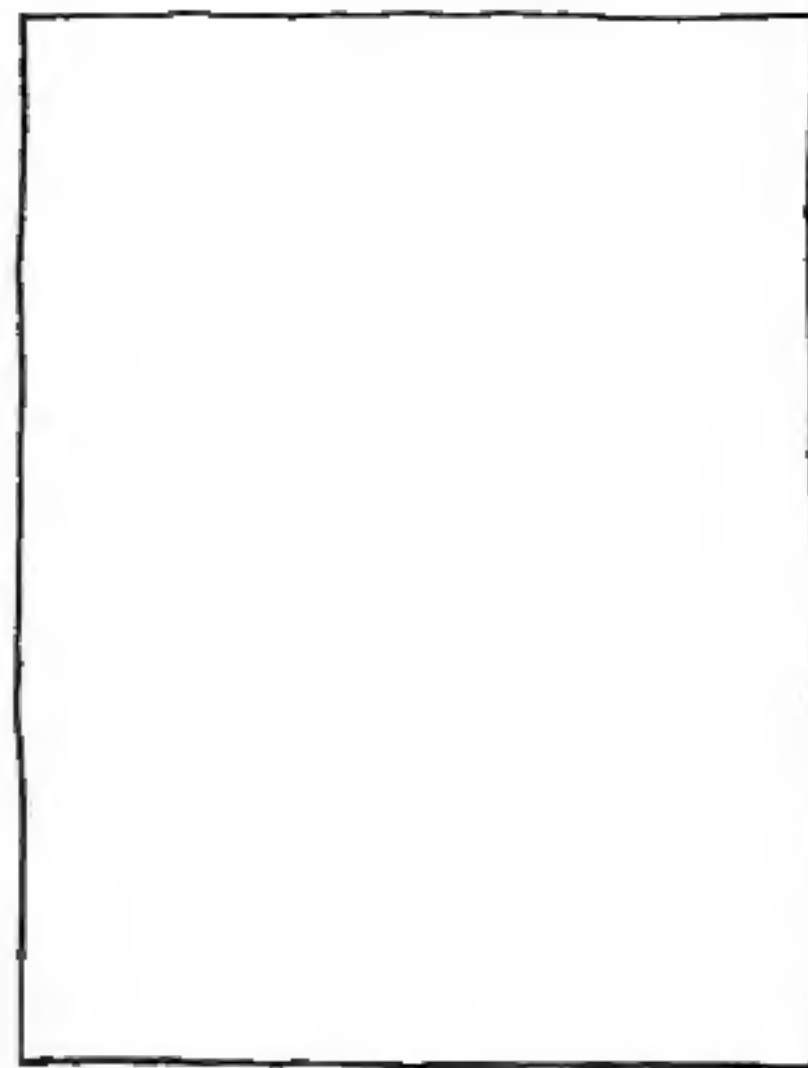
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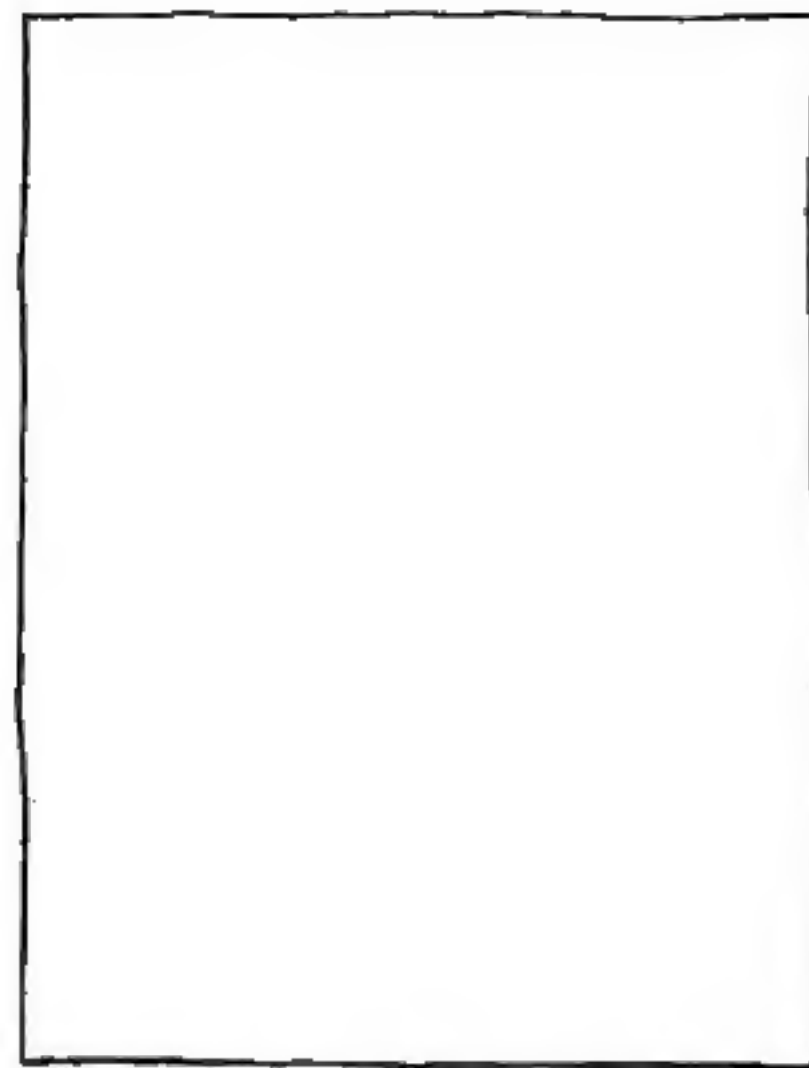
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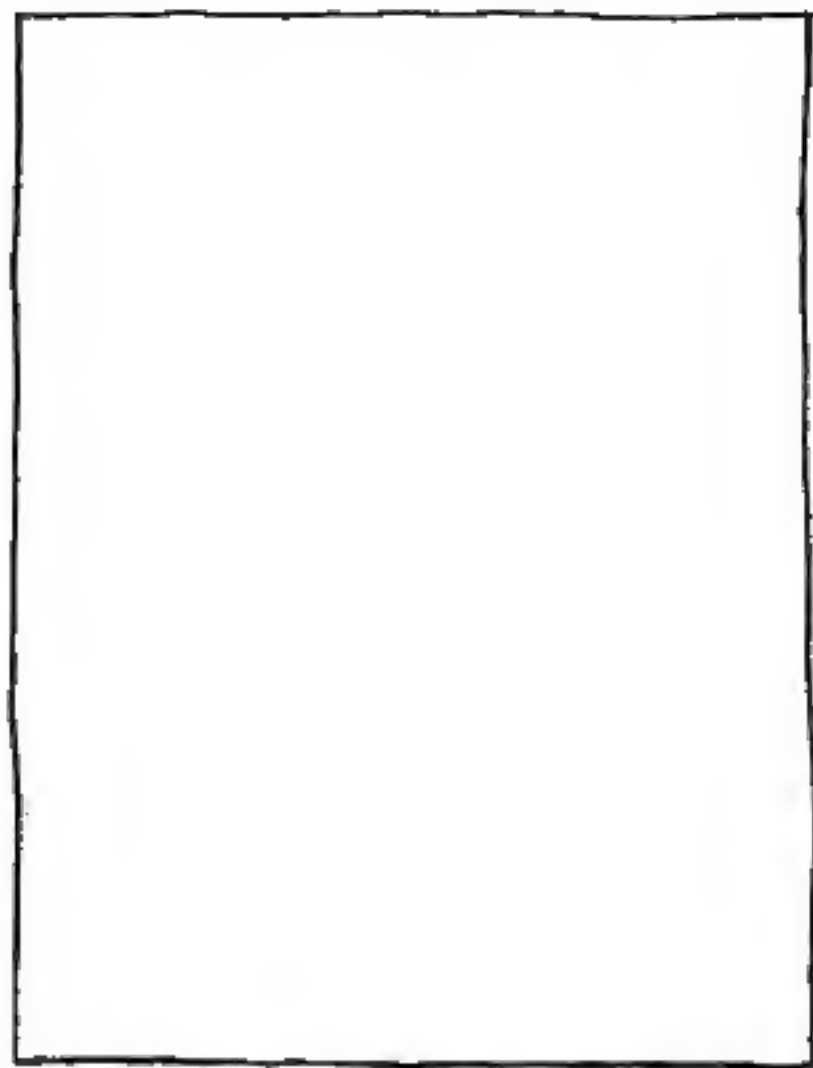
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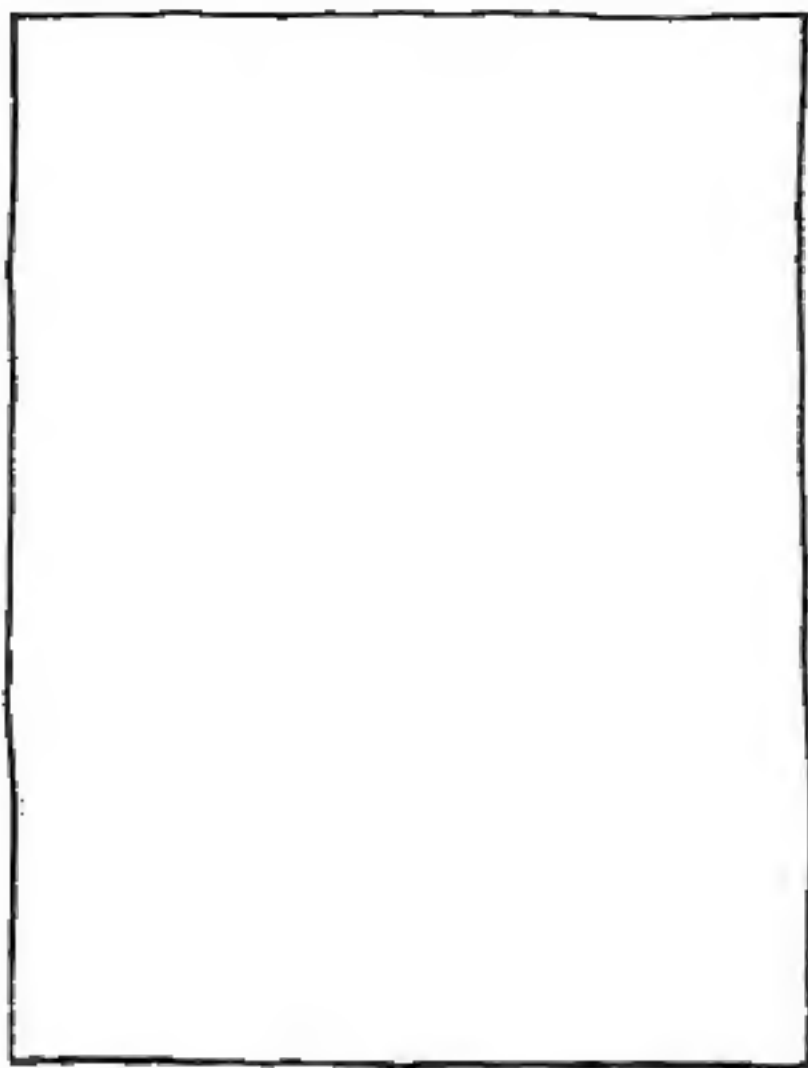
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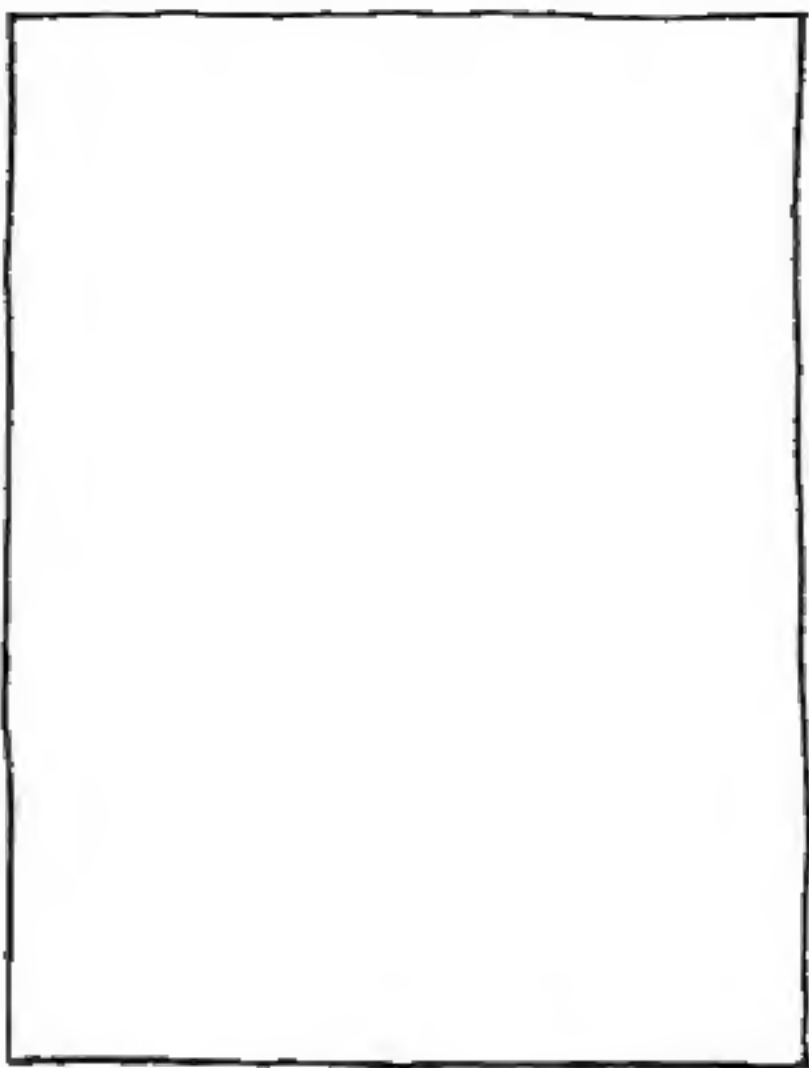
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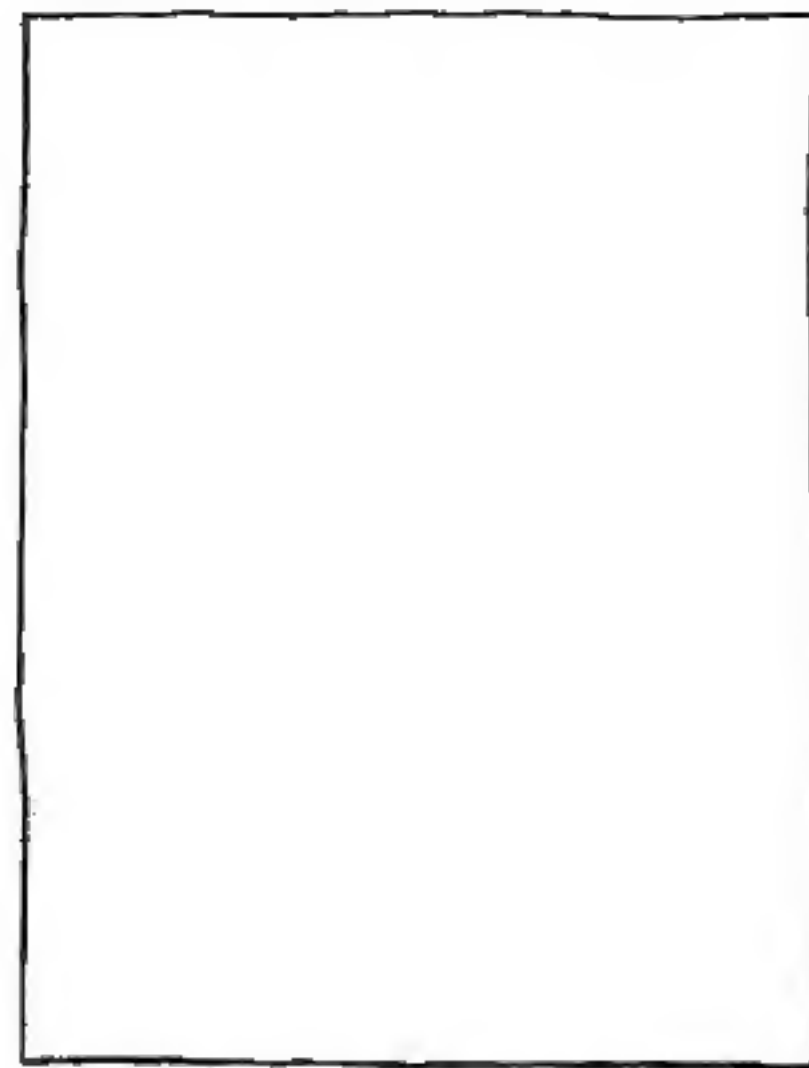
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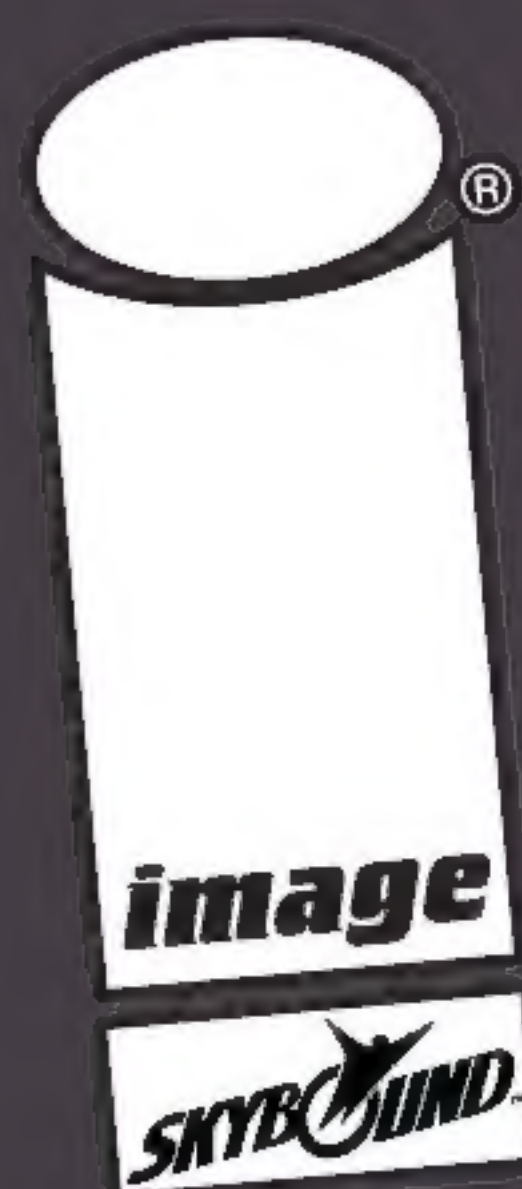
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